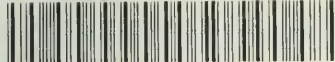


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POEMS

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THE
TRAGEDY OF MACBETH

DRAMATIS PERSONÆ.

DUNCAN, King of Scotland.

MALCOLM,
DONALBAIN, } his sons.

MACBETH,
BANQUO, } generals of the king's army.

MACDUFF,
LENNOX,
ROSS,
MENTEITH,
ANGUS,
CAITHNESS, } noblemen of Scotland.

FLEANCE, son to Banquo.

SIWARD, Earl of Northumberland, general of the English forces.

Young SIWARD, his son.

SEYTON, an officer attending on Macbeth.

Boy, son to Macduff.

An English Doctor.

A Scotch Doctor.

A Sergeant.

A Porter.

An Old Man.

LADY MACBETH.

LADY MACDUFF.

Gentlewoman attending on Lady Macbeth.

HECATE.

Three Witches.

Apparitions.

Lords, Gentlemen, Officers, Soldiers, Murderers,
Attendants, and Messengers.

SCENE: Scotland; England.

THE
TRAGEDY OF MACBETH

ACT I.

SCENE 1.—A Desert Place.

Thunder and lightning. Enter three Witches.

1st Witch. When shall we three meet again
In thunder, lightning, or in rain?

2nd Witch. When the hurly-burly's done,
When the battle's lost and won.

3rd Witch. That will be ere the set of sun.

1st Witch. Where the place?

2nd Witch. Upon the heath.

3rd Witch. There to meet with Macbeth.

1st Witch. I come, Graymalkin*! [gray cat

2nd Witch. Paddock* calls. [toad

3rd Witch. Anon.

All. Fair is foul, and foul is fair:
Hover through the fog and filthy air. [*Exeunt.*

SCENE 2.—A Camp near Forres.

Alarum within. Enter Duncan, Malcolm, Donalbain, Lennox, with Attendants, meeting a bleeding Sergeant.

Dun. What bloody man is that? He can report,
As seemeth by his plight, of the revolt
The newest state.

Mal. This is the sergeant
Who like a good and hardy soldier fought

Macbeth

'Gainst my captivity.—Hail, brave friend !
Say to the king the knowledge of the broil
As thou didst leave it.

Ser. Doubtful it stood,
As two spent swimmers that do cling together
And choke their art. The merciless Macdon-
wald—

Worthy to be a rebel, for to that
The multiplying villanies of nature
Do swarm upon him—from the western isles
Of kerns* and gallowglasses* [light and heavy armed troops
is supplied ;

And Fortune, on his damned quarrel smiling,
Show'd* like a rebel's whore : but all's [appeared
too weak ;

For brave Macbeth—well he deserves that
name—

Disdaining Fortune, with his brandish'd steel,
Which smok'd with bloody execution,
Like valour's minion* carv'd out his passage
Till he fac'd the slave ; [mignon, darling
Which ne'er shook hands, nor bade farewell to
him,

Till he unseam'd him from the nave to the chaps,
And fix'd his head upon our battlements.

Dun. O valiant cousin ! worthy gentleman !

Ser. As whence the sun gins his reflection
Shipwracking storms and direful thunders break,
So from that spring whence comfort seem'd to
come

Discomfort swells. Mark, king of Scotland,
mark :

No sooner justice had with valour arm'd
Compell'd these skipping kerns to trust their
heels,

But the Norweyan lord, surveying vantage,*

Act I Scene 2

With furbish'd arms and new supplies of men
Began a fresh assault.

Dun. Dismay'd not this
Our captains, Macbeth and Banquo?

Ser. Yes;
As sparrows eagles, or the hare the lion.
If I say sooth, I must report they were
As cannons overcharg'd with double cracks;
So they doubly redoubled strokes upon the foe:
Except they meant to bathe in reeking wounds,
Or memorize another Golgotha,
I cannot tell—

But I am faint, my gashes cry for help.

Dun. So well thy words become thee as thy
wounds;
They smack of honour both. — Go get him
surgeons. [*Exit Sergeant, attended.*]
Who comes here?

Enter Ross.

Mal. The worthy thane* of Ross.

[an Anglo-Saxon noble]

Len. What a haste looks through his eyes!
So should he look
That seems to speak things strange.

Ross. God save the king!

Dun. Whence cam'st thou, worthy thane?

Ross. From Fife, great king:
Where the Norweyan banners flout the sky
And fan our people cold. Norway himself,
With terrible numbers,
Assisted by that most disloyal traitor,
The thane of Cawdor, began a dismal conflict;
Till that Bellona's bridegroom,* lapp'd* [i. e. Macbeth
in proof, [clad
Confronted him with self-comparisons,
Point against point rebellious, arm 'gainst arm,

Macbeth

Curbing his lavish spirit : and, to conclude,
The victory fell on us.

Dun. Great happiness !

Ross. That now
Sweno, the Norways' king, craves composition* ;
Nor would we deign him burial of his men [peace
Till he disbursed at Saint Colme's Inch*

[Incheolm, in Firth of Forth
Ten thousand dollars to our general use.

Dun. No more that thane of Cawdor shall
deceive

Our bosom interest : go pronounce his present*
death,

And with his former title greet Macbeth. [instant

Ross. I'll see it done.

Dun. What he hath lost noble Macbeth hath
won. [Exeunt.

SCENE 3.—A Heath.

Thunder. Enter the three Witches.

1st Witch. Where hast thou been, sister ?

2nd Witch. Killing swine.

3rd Witch. Sister, where thou ?

1st Witch. A sailor's wife had chestnuts in
her lap,
And munch'd, and munch'd, and munch'd.
'Give me,' quoth I :

'Aroint thee,* witch !' the rump-fed [away with thee
ronyon cries.

Her husband's to Aleppo gone, master o' the
Tiger :

But in a sieve I'll thither sail,
And, like a rat without a tail,
I'll do, I'll do, and I'll do.

2nd Witch. I'll give thee a wind.

1st Witch. Thou'rt kind.

Act I Scene 3

3rd Witch. And I another.

1st Witch. I myself have all the other,
And the very ports they blow,
All the quarters that they know
I' the shipman's card.* [card of the compass
I'll drain him dry as hay :
Sleep shall neither night nor day
Hang upon his pent-house lid* ; [eye-lid
He shall live a man forbid* : [bewitched
Weary se'nnights nine times nine
Shall he dwindle, peak, and pine :
Though his bark cannot be lost,
Yet it shall be tempest-tost.
Look what I have.

2nd Witch. Show me, show me.

1st Witch. Here I have a pilot's thumb,
Wrack'd as homeward he did come.
[Drum within.

3rd Witch. A drum, a drum !
Macbeth doth come.

All. The weird sisters, hand in hand,
Posters* of the sea and land, [quick travellers
Thus do go about, about :
Thrice to thine, and thrice to mine,
And thrice again, to make up nine.
Peace ! the charm's wound up.

Enter Macbeth and Banquo.

Macb. So foul and fair a day I have not seen.

Ban. How far is't call'd to Forres? What
are these

So wither'd and so wild in their attire,
That look not like the inhabitants o' the earth,
And yet are on 't?—Live you? or are you aught
That man may question? You seem to under-
stand me,

Macbeth

By each at once her choppy finger laying
Upon her skinny lips : you should be women,
And yet your beards forbid me to interpret
That you are so.

Macb. Speak, if you can : what are you ?

1st Witch. All hail, Macbeth ! hail to thee,
thane of Glamis !

2nd Witch. All hail, Macbeth ! hail to thee,
thane of Cawdor !

3rd Witch. All hail, Macbeth, that shalt be
king hereafter !

Ban. Good sir, why do you start, and seem to
fear

Things that do sound so fair ?—I' the name of
truth,

Are ye fantastical, or that indeed

Which outwardly ye show ? My noble partner

You greet with present grace and great predic-
tion

Of noble having and of royal hope,

That he seems rapt withal ; to me you speak
not.

If you can look into the seeds of time,

And say which grain will grow and which will
not,

Speak then to me, who neither beg nor fear

Your favours nor your hate.

1st Witch. Hail !

2nd Witch. Hail !

3rd Witch. Hail !

1st Witch. Lesser than Macbeth, and greater.

2nd Witch. Not so happy, yet much happier.

3rd Witch. Thou shalt get kings, though thou
be none :

So all hail, Macbeth and Banquo !

1st Witch. Banquo and Macbeth, all hail !

Act I Scene 3

Macb. Stay, you imperfect speakers, tell me more :

By Sinel's* death I know I am thane [Macbeth's father
of Glamis ;

But how of Cawdor ? the thane of Cawdor lives,
A prosperous gentleman ; and to be king
Stands not within the prospect of belief,
No more than to be Cawdor. Say from whence
You owe this strange intelligence ? or why
Upon this blasted heath you stop our way
With such prophetic greeting ? speak, I charge
you. [Witches vanish.

Ban. The earth hath bubbles as the water has,
And these are of them. Whither are they
vanish'd ?

Macb. Into the air ; and what seem'd corporal
melted
As breath into the wind. Would they had
stay'd !

Ban. Were such things here as we do speak
about ?

Or have we eaten on the insane root* [thenbane
That takes the reason prisoner ?

Macb. Your children shall be kings.

Ban. You shall be king.

Macb. And thane of Cawdor too : went it not
so ?

Ban. To the selfsame tune and words. Who's
here ?

Enter Ross and Angus.

Ross. The king hath happily receiv'd, Macbeth,
The news of thy success ; and when he reads
Thy personal venture in the rebels' fight,
His wonders and his praises do contend
Which should be thine or his : silenc'd with that,

Macbeth

In viewing o'er the rest o' the selfsame day,
He finds thee in the stout Norwegian ranks,
Nothing afeard of what thyself didst make,
Strange images of death. As thick as tale
Came post with post, and every one did bear
Thy praises in his kingdom's great defence,
And pour'd them down before him.

Ang. We are sent
To give thee from our royal master thanks;
Only to herald thee into his sight,
Not pay thee.

Ross. And for an earnest of a greater honour,
He bade me, from him, call thee thane of Cawdor:
In which addition,* hail, most worthy thane! [title
For it is thine.

Ban. What, can the devil speak true?

Macb. The thane of Cawdor lives: why do
you dress me
In borrow'd robes?

Ang. Who was the thane lives yet,
But under heavy judgment bears that life
Which he deserves to lose. Whether he was
combin'd

[strengthen
With those of Norway; or did line* the rebel
With hidden help and vantage, or that with both
He labour'd in his country's wrack, I know not;
But treasons capital, confess'd and prov'd,
Have overthrown him.

Macb. [Aside] Glamis, and thane of Cawdor!
The greatest is behind.—Thanks for your
pains.—

Do you not hope your children shall be kings,
When those that gave the thane of Cawdor
to me

Promis'd no less to them?

Ban. That trusted home* [completely

Act I Scene 3

Might yet enkindle you unto the crown,
Besides the thane of Cawdor. But 'tis strange :
And oftentimes, to win us to our harm,
The instruments of darkness tell us truths,
Win us with honest trifles, to betray 's
In deepest consequence.—

Cousins, a word, I pray you.

Macb. [Aside] Two truths are told,
As happy prologues to the swelling act
Of the imperial theme.—I thank you, gentlemen.

[Aside] This supernatural soliciting
Cannot be ill, cannot be good : if ill,
Why hath it given me earnest of success,
Commencing in a truth ? I am thane of Cawdor :
If good, why do I yield to that suggestion
Whose horrid image doth unfix my hair
And make my seated heart knock at my ribs,
Against the use of nature ? Present fears
Are less than horrible imaginings :
My thought, whose murther yet is but fantastical,

[power of action]

Shakes so my single state of man that function*
Is smother'd in surmise, and nothing is
But what is not.

Ban. Look how our partner's rapt.

Macb. [Aside] If chance will have me king,
why, chance may crown me,
Without my stir.

Ban. New honours come upon him,
Like our strange garments, cleave not to their
mould
But with the aid of use.

Macb. [Aside] Come what come may,
Time and the hour runs through the roughest
day.

Macbeth

Ban. Worthy Macbeth, we stay upon your leisure.

Macb. Give me your favour*: my dull [pardon me]
brain was wrought* [agitated]
With things forgotten. Kind gentlemen, your pains
Are register'd where every day I turn
The leaf to read them. Let us toward the king.
Think upon what hath chanc'd, and at more
time,
The interim having weigh'd it, let us speak
Our free hearts each to other.

Ban. Very gladly.

Macb. Till then, enough.—Come, friends.

[Exeunt.]

SCENE 4.—Forres. The Palace.

Flourish. Enter Duncan, Malcolm, Donalbain, Lennox, and Attendants.

Dun. Is execution done on Cawdor? Are not Those in commission yet return'd?

Mal. My liege,
They are not yet come back. But I have spoke
With one that saw him die, who did report
That very frankly he confess'd his treasons,
Implor'd your highness' pardon, and set forth
A deep repentance: nothing in his life
Became him like the leaving it; he died
As one that had been studied in his death
To throw away the dearest thing he owed
As 'twere a careless trifle.

Dun. There's no art
To find the mind's construction in the face:
He was a gentleman on whom I built
An absolute trust.

Act I Scene 4

Enter Macbeth, Banquo, Ross, and Angus.

O worthiest cousin !

The sin of my ingratitude even now
Was heavy on me : thou art so far before
That swiftest wing of recompense is slow
To overtake thee. Would thou hadst less de-
serv'd,

That the proportion both of thanks and payment
Might have been mine ! only I have left to say,
More is thy due than more than all can pay.

Macb. The service and the loyalty I owe,
In doing it, pays itself. Your highness' part
Is to receive our duties : and our duties
Are to your throne and state children and
servants ;

Which do but what they should, by doing every
thing

Safe toward your love and honour.

Dun. Welcome hither :
I have begun to plant thee, and will labour
To make thee full of growing.—Noble Banquo,
That hast no less deserv'd, nor must be known
No less to have done so, let me infold thee
And hold thee to my heart.

Ban. There if I grow,
The harvest is your own.

Dun. My plenteous joys,
Wanton in fulness, seek to hide themselves
In drops of sorrow.—Sons, kinsmen, thanes,
And you whose places are the nearest, know
We will establish our estate upon
Our eldest, Malcolm, whom we name hereafter
The Prince of Cumberland ; which honour must
Not unaccompanied invest him only,
But signs of nobleness, like stars, shall shine
On all deservers. From hence to Inverness,

Macbeth

And bind us further to you.

Macb. The rest is labour, which is not us'd for you.

I'll be myself the harbinger and make joyful
The hearing of my wife with your approach ;
So humbly take my leave.

Dun. My worthy Cawdor !

Macb. [*Aside*] The Prince of Cumberland !
that is a step

On which I must fall down, or else o'erleap,
For in my way it lies. Stars, hide your fires !
Let not light see my black and deep desires :
The eye wink at the hand ; yet let that be
Which the eye fears, when it is done, to see.

[*Exit.*

Dun. True, worthy Banquo : he is full so
valiant,

And in his commendations I am fed ;
It is a banquet to me. Let's after him,
Whose care is gone before to bid us welcome :
It is a peerless kinsman. [*Flourish. Exeunt.*

SCENE 5.—Inverness. A Room in Macbeth's
Castle.

Enter Lady Macbeth, reading a letter.

Lady M. [*Reads*] *They met me in the day of success: and I have learned by the perfectest report, they have more in them than mortal knowledge. When I burned in desire to question them further, they made themselves air, into which they vanished. Whiles I stood rapt in the wonder of it, came missives from the king, who all-hailed me 'Thane of Cawdor;' by which title, before, these weird sisters saluted me, and referred me to the coming on of time, with 'Hail, king that shalt be!' This have I*

Act I Scene 5

thought good to deliver thee, my dearest partner of greatness, that thou mightst not lose the dues of rejoicing, by being ignorant of what greatness is promised thee. Lay it to thy heart, and farewell.

Glamis thou art, and Cawdor, and shalt be
What thou art promis'd. Yet do I fear thy
nature ;

It is too full o' the milk of human kindness
To catch the nearest way. Thou wouldst be
great ;

Art not without ambition, but without
The illness* should attend it : what thou [evil
wouldst highly,

That wouldst thou holily ; wouldst not play false,
And yet wouldst wrongly win : thou 'dst have,
great Glamis,

That which cries, ' Thus thou most do, if thou
have it ; '

And that which rather thou dost fear to do
Than wishest should be undone. Hie thee hither,
That I may pour my spirits in thine ear,
And chastise with the valour of my tongue [crown
All that impedes thee from the golden round*
Which fate and metaphysical* aid doth seem
To have thee crown'd withal. [supernatural

Enter a Messenger.

What is your tidings ?

Mess. The king comes here to-night.

Lady M. Thou 'rt mad to say it :

Is not thy master with him ? who, were 't so,
Would have inform'd for preparation.

Mess. So please you, it is true : our thane is
coming. [outstripped him

One of my fellows had the speed of him,*

Macbeth

Who, almost dead for breath, had scarcely more
Than would make up his message.

Lady M. Give him tending ;
He brings great news. [*Exit Messenger.*

The raven himself is hoarse
That croaks the fatal entrance of Duncan
Under my battlements. Come, you spirits
That tend on mortal thoughts, unsex me here,
And fill me from the crown to the toe top-full
Of direst cruelty ! make thick my blood ;
Stop up the access and passage to remorse,
That no compunctious visitings of nature
Shake my fell purpose, nor keep peace between
The effect and it ! Come to my woman's breasts,
And take my milk for gall, you murdering
ministers, [invisible forms
Wherever in your sightless substances*
You wait on nature's mischief ! Come, thick
night,
And pall thee in the dunnest smoke of hell,
That my keen knife see not the wound it makes,
Nor heaven peep through the blanket of the
dark,
To cry 'Hold, hold !'

Enter Macbeth.

Great Glamis ! worthy Cawdor !
Greater than both, by the all-hail hereafter !
Thy letters have transported me beyond
This ignorant present, and I feel now
The future in the instant.

Mac. My dearest love,
Duncan comes here to-night.

Lady M. And when goes hence ?

Macb. To-morrow, as he purposes.

Lady M. O, never

Act I Scene 6

Shall sun that morrow see !

Your face, my thane, is as a book where men
May read strange matters. To beguile the time,
Look like the time ; bear welcome in your eye,
Your hand, your tongue : look like the innocent
flower,

But be the serpent under 't. He that's coming
Must be provided for : and you shall put
This night's great business into my dispatch ;
Which shall to all our nights and days to come
Give solely sovereign sway and masterdom.

Mac. We will speak further.

Lady M. Only look up clear ;
To alter favour* ever is to fear : [change countenance
Leave all the rest to me. [*Exeunt.*

SCENE 6.—Before Macbeth's Castle.

Hautboys and torches. Enter Duncan, Malcolm, Donalbain, Banquo, Lennox, Macduff, Ross, Angus, and Attendants.

Dun. This castle hath a pleasant seat ; the air
Nimbly and sweetly recommends itself
Unto our gentle senses.

Ban. This guest of summer,
The temple-haunting martlet,* does approve [martin
By his lov'd mansionry that the heaven's breath
Smells wooingly here : no jutting,* frieze, [jetty
Buttress, nor coign of vantage, but this bird
Hath made his pendent bed and procreant
cradle :

Where they most breed and haunt, I have
observ'd

The air is delicate.

Enter Lady Macbeth.

Dun. See, see, our honour'd hostess !

Macbeth

The love that follows us sometime is our trouble,
Which still we thank as love. Herein I teach you
How you shall bid God 'ield* us for [yield, reward
your pains

And thank us for your trouble.

Lady M. All our service
In every point twice done and then done double
Were poor and single business, to contend
Against those honours deep and broad wherewith
Your majesty loads our house : for those of old,
And the late dignities heap'd up to them,
We rest your hermits.

Dun. Where's the thane of Cawdor ?
We cours'd him at the heels, and had a purpose
To be his purveyor ; but he rides well,
And his great love, sharp as his spur, hath holp
him

To his home before us. Fair and noble hostess,
We are your guest to-night.

Lady M. Your servants ever
Have theirs, themselves, and what is theirs, in
compt,*

[on account

To make their audit at your highness' pleasure,
Still to return your own.

Dun. Give me your hand ;
Conduct me to mine host : we love him highly,
And shall continue our graces towards him.
By your leave, hostess. [*Exeunt.*

SCENE 7.—Macbeth's Castle.

*Hautboys and torches. Enter a Sewer,** [a chief waiter
and divers Servants with dishes and service,
and pass over the stage. Then enter Macbeth.

Mac. If it were done when 'tis done, then
'twere well

It were done quickly : if the assassination

Act I Scene 7

Could trammel up* the consequence, [tle or net up
and catch

With his surcease,* success; that but [its conclusion
this blow

Might be the be-all and the end-all here,

But here, upon this bank and shoal of time,

We'd jump* the life to come. But in these [risk
cases

We still have judgment here; that we but teach
Bloody instructions, which being taught return
To plague the inventor: this even-handed justice
Commends the ingredients of our poison'd
chalice

To our own lips. He's here in double trust:

First, as I am his kinsman and his subject,

Strong both against the deed; then, as his host,

Who should against his murtherer shut the door,

Not bear the knife myself. Besides, this Duncan

Hath borne his faculties so meek, hath been

So clear in his great office, that his virtues

Will plead like angels trumpet-tongu'd against

The deep damnation of his taking-off*; [murder

And pity, like a naked new-born babe,

Striding the blast, or heaven's cherubin, hors'd

Upon the sightless* couriers of the air, [invisible

Shall blow the horrid deed in every eye,

That tears shall drown the wind. I have no spur

To prick the sides of my intent, but only

Vaulting ambition, which o'erleaps itself

And falls on the other.

Enter Lady Macbeth.

How now! what news?

Lady M. He has almost supp'd: why have
you left the chamber?

Macb. Hath he ask'd for me?

Macbeth

Lady M. Know you not he has?

Macb. We will proceed no further in this business :

He hath honour'd me of late ; and I have bought
Golden opinions from all sorts of people,
Which would be worn now in their newest gloss,
Not cast aside so soon.

Lady M. Was the hope drunk
Wherein you dress'd yourself? hath it slept
since?

And wakes it now, to look so green and pale
At what it did so freely? From this time
Such I account thy love. Art thou afeard
To be the same in thine own act and valour
As thou art in desire? Wouldst thou have that
Which thou esteem'st the ornament of life,
And live a coward in thine own esteem,
Letting 'I dare not' wait upon 'I would,'
Like the poor cat i' the adage?

Macb. Prithee, peace :
I dare do all that may become a man ;
Who dares do more is none.

Lady M. What beast was't then
That made you break this enterprise to me?
When you durst do it, then you were a man ;
And, to be more than what you were, you would
Be so much more the man. Nor time nor place
Did then adhere, and yet you would make both :
They have made themselves, and that their fit-
ness* now

[fitness of theirs

Does unmake you. I have given suck, and know
How tender 'tis to love the babe that milks me :
I would, while it was smiling in my face,
Have pluck'd my nipple from his boneless gums
And dash'd the brains out, had I so sworn as you
Have done to this.

Act I Scene 7

Macb. If we should fail?

Lady M. We fail.

But screw your courage to the sticking-place,
And we'll not fail. When Duncan is asleep—
Whereto the rather shall his day's hard journey
Soundly invite him—his two chamberlains
Will I with wine and wassail so convince
That memory, the warder of the brain,
Shall be a fume, and the receipt* of reason [receptacle]
A limbeck* only : when in swinish sleep [alembic]
Their drenched natures lie as in a death,
What cannot you and I perform upon
The unguarded Duncan? what not put upon
His spongy officers, who shall bear the guilt
Of our great quell*? [murder]

Macb. Bring forth men-children only ;
For thy undaunted mettle should compose
Nothing but males. Will it not be receiv'd,
When we have mark'd with blood those sleepy
two

Of his own chamber and us'd their very daggers,
That they have done 't?

Lady M. Who dares receive it other,
As we shall make our griefs and clamour roar
Upon his death?

Macb. I am settled, and bend up
Each corporal agent to this terrible feat.
Away, and mock the time with fairest show :
False face must hide what the false heart doth
know. [Exeunt.]

Macbeth

ACT II.

SCENE 1.—Court of Macbeth's Castle.

Enter Banquo, and Fleance bearing a torch before him.

Ban. How goes the night, boy?

Fle. The moon is down, I have not heard the clock.

Ban. And she goes down at twelve.

Fle. I take 't, 'tis later, sir.

Ban. Hold, take my sword. There's husbandry* in heaven; [thrift

Their candles* are all out. Take thee that [stars
too.

A heavy summons lies like lead upon me,
And yet I would not sleep. Merciful powers,
Restrain in me the cursed thoughts that nature
Gives way to in repose!

Enter Macbeth, and a Servant with a torch.

Give me my sword.—

Who's there?

Macb. A friend.

Ban. What, sir, not yet at rest? The king's
abed:

He hath been in unusual pleasure, and
Sent forth great largess to your offices.
This diamond he greets your wife withal,
By the name of most kind hostess; and shut up
In measureless content.

Macb. Being unprepar'd,
Our will became the servant to defect,
Which else should free have wrought.

Ban. All's well.
I dreamt last night of the three weird sisters:

Act II Scene 1

To you they have show'd some truth.

Macb. I think not of them :
Yet, when we can entreat an hour to serve,*

[i.e. when time shall serve]

We would spend it in some words upon that
business,

If you would grant the time.

Ban. At your kind'st leisure.

Macb. If you shall cleave to my consent, when
'tis,

It shall make honour for you.

Ban. So I lose none

In seeking to augment it, but still keep
My bosom franchis'd and allegiance clear,
I shall be counsell'd.

Macb. Good repose the while !

Ban. Thanks, sir : the like to you !

[*Excunt Banquo and Fleance.*]

Macb. Go bid thy mistress, when my drink is
ready,

She strike upon the bell. Get thee to bed.

[*Exit Servant.*]

Is this a dagger which I see before me,
The handle toward my hand ? Come, let me
clutch thee.

I have thee not, and yet I see thee still.

Art thou not, fatal vision, sensible

To feeling as to sight ? or art thou but

A dagger of the mind, a false creation,

Proceeding from the heat-oppressed brain ?

I see thee yet, in form as palpable

As this which now I draw.

Thou marshall'st me the way that I was going ;

And such an instrument I was to use.

Mine eyes are made the fools o' the other senses,

Or else worth all the rest ; I see thee still ;

Macbeth

And on thy blade and dudgeon* [handle of dagger
gouts of blood,
Which was not so before. There's no such thing:
It is the bloody business which informs
Thus to mine eyes. Now o'er the one half world
Nature seems dead, and wicked dreams abuse
The curtain'd sleep; witchcraft celebrates
Pale Hecate's offerings, and wither'd murder,
Alarum'd by his sentinel, the wolf,
Whose howl's his watch. thus with his stealthy
pace,
With Tarquin's ravishing strides, towards his
design
Moves like a ghost. Thou sure and firm-set
earth,
Hear not my steps, which way they walk, for fear
Thy very stones prate of my whereabouts,
And take the present horror from the time,
Which now suits with it. Whiles I threat he
lives:
Words to the heat of deeds too cool breath gives.
[*A bell rings.*
I go, and it is done; the bell invites me.—
Hear it not, Duncan, for it is a knell
That summons thee to heaven or to hell. [*Exit.*

SCENE 2.—The Same.

Enter Lady Macbeth.

Lady M. That which hath made them drunk
hath made me bold;
What hath quench'd them hath given me fire.—
Hark! Peace!
It was the owl that shriek'd, the fatal bellman,
Which gives the stern'st good-night. He is
about it:

Act II Scene 2

The doors are open, and the surfeited grooms
Do mock their charge with snores; I have
drugg'd their possets,
That death and nature do contend about them,
Whether they live or die.

Macb. [*Within*] Who's there? what, ho!

Lady M. Alack, I am afraid they have awak'd,
And 'tis not done. The attempt and not the deed
Confounds us. Hark! I laid their daggers ready;
He could not miss 'em. Had he not resembled
My father as he slept, I had done't.—My husband!

Enter Macbeth.

Macb. I have done the deed. Didst thou not
hear a noise?

Lady M. I heard the owl scream and the
crickets cry.

Did not you speak?

Macb. When?

Lady M. Now.

Macb. As I descended?

Lady M. Ay.

Macb. Hark!

Who lies i' the second chamber?

Lady M. Donalbain.

Macb. This is a sorry sight.

[*Looking on his hands.*]

Lady M. A foolish thought, to say a sorry sight.

Macb. There's one did laugh in's sleep, and
one cried 'Murder!'

That they did wake each other: I stood and
heard them:

But they did say their prayers, and address'd
them

Again to sleep.

Lady M. There are two lodg'd together.

Macbeth

Macb. One cried 'God bless us !' and 'Amen'
the other ;

Asthey had seen me with these hangman's hands,
Listening their fear. I could not say 'Amen'
When they did say 'God bless us !'

Lady M. Consider it not so deeply.

Macb. But wherefore could not I pronounce
'Amen ?'

I had most need of blessing, and 'Amen'
Stuck in my throat.

Lady M. These deeds must not be thought
After these ways ; so, it will make us mad.

Macb. Methought I heard a voice cry 'Sleep
no more !

Macbeth does murther sleep'—the innocent
sleep,

[ravelled floss-silk

Sleep that knits up the ravell'd sleeve* of care,
The death of each day's life, sore labour's bath,
Balm of hurt minds, great nature's second course,
Chief nourisher in life's feast,—

Lady M. What do you mean ?

Macb. Still it cried 'Sleep no more !' to all
the house :

'Glamis hath murther'd sleep, and therefore
Cawdor

Shall sleep no more ; Macbeth shall sleep no
more.'

Lady M. Who was it that thus cried ? Why,
worthy thane,

You do unbend your noble strength, to think
So brainsickly of things. Go get some water,
And wash this filthy witness from your hand.
Why did you bring these daggers from the place ?
They must lie there : go carry them, and smear
The sleepy grooms with blood.

Macb.

I'll go no more :

Act II Scene 2

I am afraid to think what I have done ;
Look on 't again I dare not.

Lady M. Infirm of purpose !
Give me the daggers : the sleeping and the dead
Are but as pictures ; 'tis the eye of childhood
That fears a painted devil. If he do bleed,
I'll gild the faces of the grooms withal ;
For it must seem their guilt.

[*Exit. Knocking within.*]

Macb. Whence is that knocking ?
How is 't with me, when every noise appals me ?
What hands are here ? Ha ! they pluck out
mine eyes.

Will all great Neptune's ocean wash this blood
Clean from my hand ? No ; this my hand will
rather

The multitudinous seas incarnadine,* [*stain carnation*]
Making the green one, red.

Re-enter Lady Macbeth.

Lady M. My hands are of your colour ; but I
shame
To wear a heart so white. [*Knocking within.*]
I hear a knocking

At the south entry : retire we to our chamber.
A little water clears us of this deed :
How easy is it, then ! Your constancy
Hath left you unattended. [*Knocking within.*]
Hark ! more knocking.

Get on your nightgown, lest occasion call us
And show us to be watchers. Be not lost
So poorly in your thoughts.

Macb. To know my deed, 'twere best not know
myself. [*Knocking within.*]
Wake Duncan with thy knocking ! I would
thou couldst ! [*Exeunt.*]

Macbeth

SCENE 3.—The Same.

Enter a Porter. Knocking within.

Port. Here's a knocking indeed! If a man were porter of hell-gate, he should have old turning the key. [*Knocking within.*] Knock, knock, knock! Who's there, i' the name of Beelzebub? Here's a farmer, that hanged himself on th' expectation of plenty: come in time; have napkins enow about you; here you'll sweat for't. [*Knocking within.*] Knock, knock! Who's there, in th' other devil's name? Faith, here's an equivocator, that could swear in both the scales against either scale; who committed treason enough for God's sake, yet could not equivocate to heaven: O, come in, equivocator. [*Knocking within.*] Knock, knock, knock! Who's there? Faith, here's an English tailor come hither, for stealing out of a French hose: come in, tailor; here you may roast your goose. [*Knocking within.*] Knock, knock; never at quiet! What are you? But this place is too cold for hell. I'll devil-porter it no further: I had thought to have let in some of all professions, that go the primrose way to the everlasting bonfire. [*Knocking within.*] Anon, anon! I pray you, remember the porter.

[Opens the gate.]

Enter Macduff and Lennox.

Macd. Was it so late, friend, ere you went to bed,

That you do lie so late?

Port. Faith, sir, we were carousing till the second cock*: and drink, sir, [about three in the morning] is a great provoker of three things.

Act II Scene 3

Macd. What three things does drink specially provoke?

Port. Marry, sir, nose painting, sleep, and urine. Lechery, sir, it provokes, and unprovokes; it provokes the desire, but takes away the performance: therefore, much drink may be said to be an equivocator with lechery: it makes him and it mars him; it sets him on, and it takes him off; it persuades him and it disheartens him; makes him stand to, and not stand to; in conclusion, equivocates him in a sleep, and, giving him the lie, leaves him.

Macd. I believe drink gave thee the lie last night.

Port. That it did, sir, i' the very throat on me; but I requited him for his lie; and, I think, being too strong for him, though he took up my legs sometime, yet I made shift to cast him.

Macd. Is thy master stirring?

Enter Macbeth.

Our knocking has awak'd him; here he comes.

Len. Good morrow, noble sir.

Macb. Good morrow, both.

Macd. Is the king stirring, worthy thane?

Macb. Not yet.

Macd. He did command me to call timely on him:

I have almost slipp'd the hour.

Macb. I'll bring you to him.

Macd. I know this is a joyful trouble to you; But yet 'tis one.

Macb. The labour we delight in physics pain. This is the door.

Macd. I'll make so bold to call,
For 'tis my limited* service. [*Exit.* (appointed

Macbeth

Len. Goes the king hence to-day?

Macb. He does : he did appoint so.

Len. The night has been unruly ; where we lay,
Our chimneys were blown down, and, as they
say,
Lamentings heard i' the air, strange screams of
death,

And prophesying with accents terrible
Of dire combustion and confus'd events
New hatch'd to the woeful time ; the obscure bird
Clamour'd the livelong night ; some say the earth
Was feverous and did shake.

Macb. 'Twas a rough night.

Len. My young remembrance cannot parallel
A fellow to it.

Re-enter Macduff.

Macd. O horror, horror, horror ? Tongue nor
heart
Cannot conceive nor name thee !

Macb. }
Len. } What's the matter ?

Macd. Confusion now hath made his master-
piece !
Most sacrilegious murder hath broke ope
The Lord's anointed temple, and stole thence
The life o' the building !

Macb. What is 't you say ? the life ?

Len. Mean you his majesty ?

Macd. Approach the chamber, and destroy
your sight
With a new Gorgon. Do not bid me speak ;
See, and then speak yourselves.

[*Exeunt Macbeth and Lennox.*

Awake, awake !
Ring the alarm-bell.—Murder and treason !

Act II Scene 3

Banquo and Donalbain! Malcolm! awake!
Shake off this downy sleep, death's counterfeit,
And look on death itself! up, up, and see
The great doom's image!—Malcolm! Banquo!
As from your graves rise up, and walk like sprites,
To countenance this horror. Ring the bell.

[*Bell rings.*]

Enter Lady Macbeth.

Lady M. What's the business,
That such a hideous trumpet calls to parley
The sleepers of the house? speak, speak!

Macd. O gentle lady,
'Tis not for you to hear what I can speak:
The repetition, in a woman's ear,
Would murder as it fell.

Enter Banquo.

O Banquo, Banquo!
Our royal master's murder'd.

Lady M. Woe, alas!
What, in our house?

Ban. Too cruel any where.
Dear Duff, I prithee, contradict thyself,
And say it is not so.

Re-enter Macbeth and Lennox.

Macb. Had I but died an hour before this
chance,
I had liv'd a blessed time; for from this instant
There's nothing serious in mortality:
All is but toys: renown and grace is dead;
The wine of life is drawn, and the mere lees
Is left this fault to brag of.

Enter Malcolm and Donalbain.

Don. What is amiss?

Macb. You are, and do not know't:

Macbeth

The spring, the head, the fountain of your blood
Is stopp'd,—the very source of it is stopp'd.

Macd. Your royal father's murder'd.

Mal. O, by whom?

Len. Those of his chamber, as it seem'd, had
done 't.

Their hands and faces were all badg'd with blood;
So were their daggers, which unwip'd we found
Upon their pillows:

They star'd, and were distracted; no man's life
Was to be trusted with them.

Macb. O, yet I do repent me of my fury,
That I did kill them.

Macd. Wherefore did you so?

Macb. Who can be wise, amaz'd, temperate
and furious,

Loyal and neutral, in a moment? No man:

The expedition of my violent love

Outrun the pauser reason. Here lay Duncan,

His silver skin lac'd with his golden blood,

And his gash'd stabs look'd like a breach in
nature

For ruin's wasteful entrance; there, the mur-
derers,

Steep'd in the colours of their trade, their daggers
Unmannerly breech'd with gore: who could re-
frain,

That had a heart to love, and in that heart
Courage to make's love known?

Lady M. Help me hence, ho!

Macd. Look to the lady.

Mal. [*Aside to Donalbain*] Why do we hold
our tongues,

That most may claim this argument for ours?

Don. [*Aside to Malcolm*] What should be
spoken here, where our fate,

Act II Scene 3

Hid in an auger-hole, may rush, and seize us?
Let's away;

Our tears are not yet brew'd.

Mal. [*Aside to Donalbain*] Nor our strong
sorrow

Upon the foot of motion.

Ban. Look to the lady;
[*Lady Macbeth is carried out.*]

And when we have our naked frailties hid,
That suffer in exposure, let us meet,
And question this most bloody piece of work,
To know it further. Fears and scruples shake
us:

In the great hand of God I stand, and thence
Against the undivulg'd pretence I fight
Of treasonous malice.

Macd. And so do I.

All. So all.

Macb. Let's briefly put on manly readiness,
And meet i' the hall together.

All. Well contented.

[*Exeunt all but Malcolm and Donalbain.*]

Mal. What will you do? Let's not consort
with them:

To show an unfelt sorrow is an office
Which the false man does easy. I'll to
England.

Don. To Ireland, I: our separated fortune
Shall keep us both the safer; where we are,
There's daggers in men's smiles: the near in
blood,
The nearer bloody.

Mal. This murderous shaft that's shot
Hath not yet lighted, and our safest way
Is to avoid the aim. Therefore, to horse;
And let us not be dainty of leave-taking,

Macbeth

But shift away : there's warrant in that theft
Which steals itself when there's no mercy left.
[*Exeunt.*]

SCENE 4.—Without the Castle.

Enter Ross and an old Man.

Old M. Threescore and ten I can remember
well :

Within the volume of which time I have seen
Hours dreadful and things strange ; but this
sore night

Hath trifled former knowings.

Ross. Ah, good father,
Thou seest, the heavens, as troubled with man's
act,

Threaten his bloody stage : by the clock 'tis
day,

And yet dark night strangles the travelling
lamp.*

[*obscares the sun*]

Is't night's predominance, or the day's shame,
That darkness does the face of earth entomb,
When living light should kiss it?

Old M. 'Tis unnatural,
Even like the deed that's done. On Tuesday
last,

A falcon, towering in her pride of place,
Was by a mousing owl hawk'd at and kill'd.

Ross. And Duncan's horses—a thing most
strange and certain—

[*favourites*]

Beauteous and swift, the minions* of their race,
Turn'd wild in nature, broke their stalls, flung
out,

Contending 'gainst obedience, as they would
make

Act II Scene 4

War with mankind.

Old M. 'Tis said they eat each other.

Ross. They did so, to the amazement of mine eyes

That look'd upon't. Here comes the good Macduff.

Enter Macduff.

How goes the world, sir, now?

Macd. Why, see you not?

Ross. Is't known who did this more than bloody deed?

Macd. Those that Macbeth hath slain.

Ross. Alas, the day!

What good could they pretend?

Macd. They were suborn'd :
Malcolm and Donalbain, the king's two sons,
Are stolen away and fled, which puts upon them

Suspicion of the deed.

Ross. 'Gainst nature still :
Thriftless ambition, that wilt ravin up
Thine own life's means ! Then 'tis most like
The sovereignty will fall upon Macbeth.

Macd. He is already nam'd, and gone to Scone*
To be invested. [the 'stone of Scone,' now in Westminster Abbey]

Ross. Where is Duncan's body?

Macd. Carried to Colme-kill,* [Icolmkill, or Iona]
The sacred storehouse of his predecessors
And guardian of their bones.

Ross. Will you to Scone?

Macd. No, cousin, I'll to Fife.

Ross. Well, I will thither.

Macd. Well, may you see things well done
there : adieu !

Lest our old robes sit easier than our new !

Macbeth

Ross. Farewell, father.

Old M. God's benison go with you, and with those

That would make good of bad, and friends of foes ! *[Exeunt.]*

ACT III.

SCENE 1.—*Forres.* A Room in the Palace.

Enter Banquo.

Ban. Thou hast it now.—King, Cawdor, Glamis, all,—

As the weird women promis'd, and I fear
Thou play'dst most foully for't. Yet it was said

It should not stand in thy posterity,
But that myself should be the root and father
Of many kings. If there come truth from them—
As upon thee, Macbeth, their speeches shine—
Why, by the verities on thee made good,
May they not be my oracles as well
And set me up in hope? But hush ! no more.

Sennet sounded. Enter Macbeth, as king ; Lady Macbeth, as queen ; Lennox, Ross, Lords, Ladies, and Attendants.

Macb. Here's our chief guest.

Lady M. If he had been forgotten,
It had been as a gap in our great feast,
And all-thing unbecoming.

Macb. To-night we hold a solemn supper, sir,
And I'll request your presence.

Ban. Let your highness
Command upon me, to the which my duties
Are with a most indissoluble tie
For ever knit.

Act III Scene 1

Macb. Ride you this afternoon?

Ban. Ay, my good lord.

Macb. We should have else desir'd your good advice,

Which still hath been both grave and prosperous,

In this day's council; but we'll take to-morrow.
Is't far you ride?

Ban. As far, my lord, as will fill up the time
'Twixt this and supper: go not my horse the better,

I must become a borrower of the night
For a dark hour or twain.

Macb. Fail not our feast.

Ban. My lord, I will not.

Macb. We hear our bloody cousins are bestow'd

In England and in Ireland, not confessing
Their cruel parricide, filling their hearers
With strange invention: but of that to-morrow,
When therewithal we shall have cause of state
Craving us jointly. Hie you to horse: adieu,
Till you return at night. Goes Fleance with you?

Ban. Ay, my good lord: our time does call upon's.

Macb. I wish your horses swift and sure of foot;

And so I do commend you to their backs.

Farewell. [*Exit Banquo.*]

Let every man be master of his time

Till seven at night. To make society

The sweeter welcome, we will keep ourself

Till supper-time alone: while then, God be with you!

[*Exeunt all but Macbeth and an Attendant.*]

Macbeth

Sirrah, a word with you : attend those men
Our pleasure ?

Attend. They are, my lord, without the palace
gate.

Macb. Bring them before us. [*Exit Attendant.*]
To be thus is nothing ;

But to be safely thus. Our fears in Banquo
Stick deep ; and in his royalty of nature
Reigns that which would be fear'd : 'tis much
he dares,

And, to that dauntless temper of his mind,
He hath a wisdom that doth guide his valour
To act in safety. There is none but he
Whose being I do fear : and under him
My Genius is rebuk'd, as it is said
Mark Antony's was by Cæsar. He chid the
sisters,

When first they put the name of king upon me,
And bade them speak to him ; then prophet-
like

They hail'd him father to a line of kings.
Upon my head they plac'd a fruitless crown,
And put a barren sceptre in my gripe,
Thence to be wrench'd with an unlineal hand,
No son of mine succeeding. If't be so,
For Banquo's issue have I fil'd* my mind ; [*defiled*]
For them the gracious Duncan have I murder'd ;
Put rancours in the vessel of my peace
Only for them ; and mine eternal jewel*
Given to the common enemy of man, [*? immortal soul*]
To make them kings, the seed of Banquo
kings !

Rather than so, come, fate, into the list,
And champion me to the utterance* !—Who's
there?

[*last extremity*]

Act III Scene 1

Re-enter Attendant, with two Murderers.

Now go to the door, and stay there till we call.

[Exit Attendant.]

Was it not yesterday we spoke together?

1st Mur. It was, so please your highness.

Macb.

Well then, now

Have you consider'd of my speeches? Know

That it was he in the times past which held
you

So under fortune, which you thought had been

Our innocent self. This I made good to you

In our last conference, pass'd in probation with
you,

How you were borne in hand,* *[buoyed up by false hopes]*
how cross'd, the instruments,

Who wrought with them, and all things else
that might

To have a soul and to a notion craz'd

Say 'Thus did Banquo.'

1st Mur.

You made it known to us.

Macb. I did so, and went further, which is
now

Our point of second meeting. Do you find

Your patience so predominant in your nature

That you can let this go? Are you so gossell'd

To pray for this good man and for his issue,

Whose heavy hand hath bow'd you to the
grave

And beggar'd yours for ever?

1st Mur.

We are men, my liege.

Macb. Ay, in the catalogue ye go for men,

As hounds and greyhounds, mongrels, spaniels,
curs,

Shoughs,* water-rugs,* and *[shaggy, rough water-dogs]*
demi-wolves, are clept* *[called]*

All by the name of dogs: the valued file* *[valuation]*

Macbeth

Distinguishes the swift, the slow, the subtle,
The housekeeper, the hunter, every one
According to the gift which bounteous nature
Hath in him clos'd ; whereby he does receive
Particular addition, from the bill
That writes them all alike : and so of men.
Now if you have a station in the file,
Not i' the worst rank of manhood, say 't,
And I will put that business in your bosoms,
Whose execution takes your enemy off,
Grapples you to the heart and love of us,
Who wear our health but sickly in his life,
Which in his death were perfect.

2nd Mur. I am one, my liege,
Whom the wild blows and buffets of the world
Have so incens'd that I am reckless what
I do to spite the world.

1st Mur. And I another
So weary with disasters, tugg'd with fortune,
That I would set my life on any chance,
To mend it or be rid on 't.

Macb. Both of you
Know Banquo was your enemy.

Both Mur. True, my lord.

Macb. So he is mine, and in such bloody
distance
That every minute of his being thrusts
Against my near'st of life : and though I could
With barefac'd power sweep him from my
sight
And bid my will avouch it, yet I must not,
For certain friends that are both his and mine,
Whose loves I may not drop, but wail his fall
Who I myself struck down : and thence it is,
That I to your assistance do make love,
Masking the business from the common eye

Act III Scene 2

For sundry weighty reasons.

2nd Mur. We shall, my lord,
Perform what you command us.

1st Mur. Though our lives—

Macb. Your spirits shine through you.

Within this hour at most

I will advise you where to plant yourselves,
Acquaint you with the perfect spy o' the time,
The moment on 't; for 't must be done to-night,
And something from the palace; always thought
That I require a clearness: and with him—
To leave no rubs nor botches in the work—
Fleance his son, that keeps him company,
Whose absence is no less material to me
Than is his father's, must embrace the fate
Of that dark hour. Resolve yourselves* apart:
I'll come to you anon. [decide amongst yourselves]

Both Mur. We are resolv'd, my lord.

Macb. I'll call upon you straight: abide
within. [Exeunt Murderers.]

It is concluded: Banquo, thy soul's flight,
If it find heaven, must find it out to-night. [Exit.]

SCENE 2.—The Same. Another Room.

Enter Lady Macbeth and a Servant.

Lady M. Is Banquo gone from court?

Serv. Ay, madam, but returns again to-night.

Lady M. Say to the king, I would attend his
leisure

For a few words.

Serv. Madam, I will. [Exit.]

Lady M. Nought's had, all's spent,

Where our desire is got without content:

Tis safer to be that which we destroy

Than by destruction dwell in doubtful joy.

Macbeth

Enter Macbeth.

How now, my lord! why do you keep alone,
Of sorriest fancies your companions making,
Using those thoughts which should indeed have
died

With them they think on? Things without all
remedy

Should be without regard: what's done is done.

Macb. We have scotch'd the snake, not kill'd it:
She'll close and be herself, whilst our poor malice
Remains in danger of her former tooth.

But let the frame of things disjoint, both the
worlds suffer,

Ere we will eat our meal in fear, and sleep

In the affliction of these terrible dreams

That shake us nightly; better be with the dead,

Whom we, to gain our peace, have sent to peace,

Than on the torture of the mind to lie

In restless ecstasy. Duncan is in his grave;

After life's fitful fever he sleeps well;

Treason has done his worst: nor steel, nor
poison,

Malice domestic, foreign levy, nothing,

Can touch him further.

Lady M.

Come on;

Gentle my lord, 'sleek o'er your rugged looks;

Be bright and jovial among your guests to-night.

Macb. So shall I, love; and so, I pray, be
you:

Let your remembrance apply to Banquo;

Present him eminence,* both with [show him honour
eye and tongue:

Unsafe the while that we

Must lave our honours in these flattering
streams,

And make our faces vizards to our hearts,

Act III Scene 2

Disguising what they are.

Lady M. You must leave this.

Macb. O, full of scorpions is my mind, dear wife!

Thou know'st that Banquo, and his Fleance, lives.

Lady M. But in them nature's copy's not eterne.

Macb. There's comfort yet; they are assailable;

Then be thou jocund. Ere the bat hath flown
His cloister'd flight, ere to black Hecate's summons
[borne in the air by its scaly wing-cases

The shard-borne* beetle with his drowsy hums
Hath rung night's yawning* peal, there [drowsy
shall be done

A dead of dreadful note.

Lady M. What's to be done?

Macb. Be innocent of the knowledge, dearest chuck.

Till thou applaud the deed.—Come, seeling*
night, [blinding

Scarf* up the tender eye of pitiful day, [cover
And with thy bloody and invisible hand
Cancel and tear to pieces that great bond
Which keeps me pale! Light thickens, and the
crow

Makes wing to the rooky wood:

Good things of day begin to droop and drowse,
Whiles night's black agents to their preys do
rouse.

Thou marvell'st at my words; but hold thee
still:

Things bad begun make strong themselves by ill.
So, prithee, go with me. [Exeunt.

Macbeth

SCENE 3.—A Park near the Palace.

Enter three Murderers.

1st Mur. But who did bid thee join with us?

3rd Mur. Macbeth.

2nd Mur. He needs not our mistrust, since he delivers

Our offices and what we have to do
To the direction just.

1st Mur. Then stand with us.

The west yet glimmers with some streaks of day:
Now spurs the lated traveller apace
To gain the timely inn, and near approaches
The subject of our watch.

3rd Mur. Hark! I hear horses.

Ban. [Within] Give us a light there, ho!

2nd Mur. Then 'tis he: the rest
That are within the note of expectation
Already are i' the court.

1st Mur. His horses go about.

3rd Mur. Almost a mile: but he does usually,
So all men do, from hence to the palace gate
Make it their walk.

2nd Mur. A light, a light!

Enter Banquo, and Fleance with a torch.

3rd Mur. 'Tis he.

1st Mur. Stand to't.

Ban. It will be rain to-night.

1st Mur. Let it come down.

[*They set upon Banquo.*]

Ban. O, treachery! Fly, good Fleance, fly,
fly, fly!

Thou mayst revenge.—O slave!

[*Dies. Fleance escapes.*]

3rd Mur. Who did strike out the light?

Act III Scene 4

1st Mur. Was't not the way?

3rd Mur. There's but one down; the son is fled.

2nd Mur. We have lost

Best half of our affair.

1st Mur. Well, let's away and say how much
is done. [Exeunt.]

SCENE 4.—Hall in the Palace.

A Banquet prepared. Enter Macbeth, Lady Macbeth, Ross, Lennox, Lords, and Attendants.

Macb. You know your own degrees; sit down:
at first

And last the hearty welcome.

Lords. Thanks to your majesty.

Macb. Ourselves will mingle with society

And play the humble host.

Our hostess keeps her state, but in best time

We will require her welcome.

Lady M. Pronounce it for me, sir, to all our
friends;

For my heart speaks they are welcome.

First Murderer appears at the door.

Macb. See, they encounter thee with their
hearts' thanks.

Both sides are even: here I'll sit i' the midst.

Be large in mirth; anon we'll drink a measure

The table round. [Approaching the door]

There's blood upon thy face.

Mur. 'Tis Banquo's then.

Macb. 'Tis better thee without than he within.

Is he dispatch'd?

Mur. My lord, his throat is cut; that I did for
him.

Macb. Thou art the best o' the cut-throats:
yet he's good

Macbeth

That did the like for Fleance : if thou didst it,
Thou art the nonpareil.

Mur. Most royal sir,
Fleance is scap'd.

Macb. [*Aside*] Then comes my fit again : I had
else been perfect,
Whole as the marble, founded as the rock,
As broad and general as the casing air ;
But now I am cabin'd, cribb'd, confin'd, bound in
To saucy doubts and fears.—But Banquo's safe ?

Mur. Ay, my good lord : safe in a ditch he
bides,
With twenty trenched gashes on his head,
The least a death to nature.

Macb. Thanks for that.
[*Aside*] There the grown serpent lies ; the worm
that's fled

Hath nature that in time will venom breed,
No teeth for the present.—Get thee gone : to-
morrow

We'll hear, ourselves, again. [*Exit Murderer.*

Lady M. My royal lord,
You do not give the cheer* ; the [expected cheerfulness
feast is sold

That is not often vouch'd, while 'tis a-making,
'Tis given with welcome : to feed were best at
home ;

From thence* the sauce to meat is [away from home
ceremony ;

Meeting were bare without it.

Macb. Sweet remembrancer !
Now good digestion wait on appetite,
And health on both !

Len. May't please your highness sit.
[*The Ghost of Banquo enters, and
sits in Macbeth's place.*

Act III Scene 4

Macb. Here had we now our country's honour
roof'd,

Were the grac'd person of our Banquo present;
Who may I rather challenge for unkindness
Than pity for mischance!

Ross. His absence, sir,
Lays blame upon his promise. Please't your
highness

To grace us with your royal company.

Macb. The table's full.

Len. Here is a place reserv'd, sir.

Macb. Where?

Len. Here, my good lord. What is't that
moves your highness?

Macb. Which of you have done this?

Lords. What, my good lord?

Macb. Thou canst not say I did it: never shake
Thy gory locks at me.

Ross. Gentlemen, rise: his highness is not well.

Lady M. Sit, worthy friends, my lord is often
thus,
And hath been from his youth: pray you, keep
seat;

The fit is momentary; upon a thought
He will again be well. If much you note him,
You shall offend him and extend his passion;
Feed, and regard him not.—Are you a man?

Macb. Ay, and a bold one, that dare look on
that
Which might appal the devil.

Lady M. O proper stuff!
This is the very painting of your fear:
This is the air-drawn dagger which, you said,
Led you to Duncan. O, these flaws* and [gusts
starts,

Impostors to true fear, would well become

Macbeth

A woman's story at a winter's fire,
Authoriz'd by her grandam. Shame itself!
Why do you make such faces? When all's done,
You look but on a stool.

Macb. Prithee, see there! behold! look! lo!
how say you?

Why, what care I? If thou canst nod, speak too.
If charnel-houses and our graves must send
Those that we bury back, our monuments
Shall be the maws of kites. [*Ghost vanishes.*

Lady M. What, quite unmann'd in folly?

Macb. If I stand here, I saw him.

Lady M. Fie, for shame!

Macb. Blood hath been shed ere now, i' the
olden time,

Ere human statute purg'd the gentle weal;
Ay, and since too, murthers have been perform'd
Too terrible for the ear: the time has been,
That when the brains were out the man would die,
And there an end; but now they rise again,
With twenty mortal murthers on their crowns,
And push us from our stools. This is more strange
Than such a murder is.

Lady M. My worthy lord,
Your noble friends do lack you.

Macb. I do forget.
Do not muse at me, my most worthy friends;
I have a strange infirmity, which is nothing
To those that know me. Come, love and health
to all;

Then I'll sit down. Give me some wine, fill full.
I drink to the general joy o' the whole table,
And to our dear friend Banquo, whom we miss;
Would he were here! to all, and him we thirst,
And all to all.

Lords. Our duties, and the pledge.

Act III Scene 4

Re-enter Ghost.

Macb. Avaunt! and quit my sight! let the earth hide thee!

Thy bones are marrowless, thy blood is cold;
Thou hast no speculation in those eyes
Which thou dost glare with.

Lady M. Think of this, good peers,
But as a thing of custom: 'tis no other;
Only it spoils the pleasure of the time.

Macb. What man dare, I dare:
Approach thou like the rugged Russian bear,
The arm'd rhinoceros, or the Hyrcan* tiger;
[Hyrcania, s.e. of Caspian Sea]
Take any shape but that, and my firm nerves
Shall never tremble: or be alive again,
And dare me to the desert with thy sword;
If trembling I inhabit* then, protest [i.e. stay at home]
me

The baby of a girl. Hence, horrible shadow!
Unreal mockery, hence! [*Ghost vanishes.*]

Why, so: being gone,
I am a man again.—Pray you, sit still.

Lady M. You have displac'd the mirth, broke
the good meeting,
With most admir'd* disorder. [astonishing]

Macb. Can such things be,
And overcome us like a summer's cloud,
Without our special wonder? You make me
strange

Even to the disposition that I owe,* [down]
When now I think you can behold such sights,
And keep the natural ruby of your cheeks,
When mine is blanch'd with fear.

Ross. What sights, my lord?

Lady M. I pray you, speak not; he grows
worse and worse;

Macbeth

Question enrages him. At once, good night :
Stand not upon the order of your going,
But go at once.

Len. Good night ; and better health
Attend his majesty !

Lady M. A kind good night to all !

[*Exeunt all but Macbeth and Lady Macbeth.*]

Macb. It will have blood, they say ; blood will
have blood :

Stones have been known to move and trees to
speak ;

Augurs and understood relations* have [indications
By magot-pies* and choughs and rooks [magpies
brought forth

The secret'st man of blood.—What is the night ?

Lady M. Almost at odds with morning, which
is which.

Macb. How say'st thou, that Macduff denies
his person

At our great bidding ?

Lady M. Did you send to him, sir ?

Macb. I hear it by the way, but I will send :
There's not a one of them but in his house
I keep a servant fee'd. I will to-morrow,
And betimes I will, to the weird sisters :
More shall they speak, for now I am bent to
know,

By the worst means, the worst. For mine own
good

All causes shall give way : I am in blood
Stepp'd in so far that, should I wade no more,
Returning were as tedious as go o'er.
Strange things I have in head that will to hand,
Which must be acted ere they may be scann'd.

Lady M. You lack the season* of all [seasoning
natures, sleep.

Act III Scene 5

Macb. Come, we'll to sleep. My strange and
self-abuse* [self-deception]
Is the initiate fear that wants hard use :
We are yet but young in deed. [*Exeunt.*]

SCENE 5.—A Heath.

Thunder. Enter the three Witches, meeting
Hecate.

1st Witch. Why, how now, Hecate ! you look
angrily.

Hec. Have I not reason, beldams as you are,
Saucy and overbold ? How did you dare
To trade and traffic with Macbeth
In riddles and affairs of death ;
And I, the mistress of your charms,
The close contriver of all harms,
Was never call'd to bear my part,
Or show the glory of our art ?
And, which is worse, all you have done
Hath been but for a wayward son,
Spiteful and wrathful ; who, as others do,
Loves for his own ends, not for you.
But make amends now : get you gone,
And at the pit of Acheron
Meet me i' the morning : thither he
Will come to know his destiny.
Your vessels and your spells provide,
Your charms and every thing beside.
I am for the air ; this night I'll spend
Unto a dismal and a fatal end :
Great business must be wrought ere noon.
Upon the corner of the moon
There hangs a vaporous drop profound ;
I'll catch it ere it come to ground :
And that, distill'd by magic sleights,

Macbeth

Shall raise such artificial sprites
As by the strength of their illusion
Shall draw him on to his confusion.
He shall spurn fate, scorn death, and bear
His hopes 'bove wisdom, grace, and fear :
And you all know security* [carelessness
Is mortals' chiefest enemy.

*[Music and a song within: 'Come away,
come away,' etc.]*

Hark ! I am call'd ; my little spirit, see,
Sits in a foggy cloud, and stays for me. *[Exit.]*

1st *Witch.* Come, let's make haste ; she'll
soon be back again. *[Exeunt.]*

SCENE 6.—Forres. The Palace.

Enter Lennox and another Lord.

Len. My former speeches have but hit your
thoughts,

Which can interpret farther : only I say
Things have been strangely borne. The gracious
Duncan

Was pitied of Macbeth : marry, he was dead ;
And the right-valiant Banquo walk'd too late ;
Whom, you may say, if 't please you, Fleance
kill'd,

For Fleance fled : men must not walk too late.
Who cannot want the thought, how monstrous
It was for Malcolm and for Donalbain
To kill their gracious father ? damned fact* ! [deed
How it did grieve Macbeth ! did he not straight
In pious rage the two delinquents tear, [captives
That were the slaves of drink and thralls* of sleep ?
Was not that nobly done ? Ay, and wisely too ;
For 'twould have anger'd any heart alive
To hear the men deny't. So that, I say,

Act III Scene 6

He has borne all things well: and I do think
That had he Duncan's sons under his key—
As, an't please heaven, he shall not—they should
find

What 'twere to kill a father; so should Fleance.
But, peace! for from broad words, and 'cause
he fail'd

His presence at the tyrant's feast, I hear
Macduff lives in disgrace. Sir, can you tell
Where he bestows himself?

Lord. The son of Duncan,
From whom this tyrant holds the due of birth,
Lives in the English court, and is receiv'd
Of the most pious Edward with such grace
That the malevolence of fortune nothing
Takes from his high respect. Thither Macduff
Is gone to pray the holy king, upon his aid
To wake Northumberland and warlike Siward;
That by help of these, with Him above
To ratify the work, we may again
Give to our tables meat, sleep to our nights,
Free from our feasts and banquets bloody knives,
Do faithful homage and receive free honours;
All which we pine for now. And this report
Hath so exasperate the king that he
Prepares for some attempt of war.

Len. Sent he to Macduff?

Lord. He did: and with an absolute 'Sir, not I,'
The cloudy messenger turns me his back,
And hums, as who should say 'You'll rue the
time

That clogs me with this answer.'

Len. And that well might
Advise him to a caution, to hold what distance
His wisdom can provide. Some holy angel
Fly to the court of England and unfold

Macbeth

His message ere he come, that a swift blessing
May soon return to this our suffering country
Under a hand accurs'd !

Lord. I'll send my prayers with him !
[*Exeunt.*

ACT IV.

SCENE 1.—A Cavern. In the Middle, a
Boiling Cauldron.

Thunder. Enter the three Witches.

1st Witch. Thrice the brinded cat hath mew'd.

2nd Witch. Thrice and once the hedge-pig
whin'd.

3rd Witch. Harpier cries,—'tis time, 'tis time.

1st Witch. Round about the cauldron go ;
In the poison'd entrails throw.

Toad, that under cold stone
Days and nights has thirty-one
Swelter'd venom sleeping got,
Boil thou first i' the charmed pot.

All. Double, double toil and trouble ;
Fire burn and cauldron bubble.

2nd Witch. Fillet of a fenny snake,
In the cauldron boil and bake ;
Eye of newt and toe of frog,
Wool of bat and tongue of dog,
Adder's fork* and blind-worm's sting, [forked tongue
Lizard's leg and howlet's wing,
For a charm of powerful trouble,
Like a hell-broth boil and bubble.

All. Double, double toil and trouble ;
Fire burn and cauldron bubble.

3rd Witch. Scale of dragon, tooth of wolf,
Witches' mummy, maw and gulf* [gullet
Of the ravin'd* salt-sea shark, [ravenous

Act IV Scene 1

Root of hemlock digg'd i' the dark,
Liver of blaspheming Jew,
Gall of goat, and slips of yew
Sliver'd* in the moon's eclipse,*[torn off at an unlucky time]
Nose of Turk and Tartar's lips,
Finger of birth-strangled babe
Ditch-deliver'd by a drab,
Make the gruel thick and slab :
Add thereto a tiger's chaudron,* [entrails]
For the ingredients of our cauldron.

All. Double, double toil and trouble ;
Fire burn and cauldron bubble.

2nd Witch. Cool it with a baboon's blood,
Then the charm is firm and good.

Enter Hecate.

Hec. O, well done ! I commend your pains ;
And every one shall share i' the gains :
And now about the cauldron sing,
Like elves and fairies in a ring,
Enchanting all that you put in.

[Music and a song : ' Black spirits,' etc.]

Hecate retires.

2nd Witch. By the pricking of my thumbs,
Something wicked this way comes.

Open, locks,
Whoever knocks !

Enter Macbeth.

Macb. How now, you secret, black, and mid-
night hags !
What is 't you do ?

All. A deed without a name.

Macb. I conjure you, by that which you pro-
fess,
Howe'er you come to know it, answer me :

Macbeth

Though you untie the winds and let them fight
Against the churches ; though the yesty waves
Confound and swallow navigation up ;
Though bladed corn be lodg'd* and trees (laid
blown down ;

Though castles topple on their warders' heads ;
Though palaces and pyramids do slope
Their heads to their foundations ; though the
treasure

Of nature's germens* tumble all together, (germs
Even till destruction sicken ; answer me
To what I ask you.

1st Witch. Speak.

2nd Witch. Demand.

3rd Witch. We'll answer.

1st Witch. Say, if thou'dst rather hear it from
our mouths,

Or from our masters.

Macb. Call 'em ; let me see 'em.

1st Witch. Pour in sow's blood, that hath eaten
Her nine farrow ; grease that's sweaten
From the murtherer's gibbet throw
Into the flame.

All. Come, high or low ;
Thyself and office deftly show !

Thunder. *First Apparition : an armed Head.*

Macb. Tell me, thou unknown power,—

1st Witch. He knows thy thought :
Hear his speech, but say thou nought.

1st App. Macbeth ! Macbeth ! Macbeth ! be-
ware Macduff ;
Beware the thane of Fife. Dismiss me : enough.

[Descends.]

Macb. Whate'er thou art, for thy good cau-
tion thanks ;

Act IV Scene 1

Thou hast harp'd my fear aright : but one word
more,—

1st Witch. He will not be commanded : here's
another,

More potent than the first.

Thunder. Second Apparition : a bloody Child.

2nd App. Macbeth ! Macbeth ! Macbeth !

Macb. Had I three ears, I'd hear thee.

2nd App. Be bloody, bold, and resolute ; laugh
to scorn

The power of man, for none of woman born
Shall harm Macbeth.

[*Descends.*

Macb. Then live, Macduff : what need I fear
of thee ?

But yet I'll make assurance double sure,
And take a bond of fate : thou shalt not live ;
That I may tell pale-hearted fear it lies,
And sleep in spite of thunder.

*Thunder. Third Apparition : a Child crowned,
with a tree in his hand.*

What is this,

That rises like the issue of a king,
And wears upon his baby brow the round
And top of sovereignty ?

All. Listen, but speak not to't.

3rd App. Be lion-mettled, proud, and take no
care

Who chafes, who frets, or where conspirers are :
Macbeth shall never vanquish'd be until
Great Birnam* wood to high Dunsinane hill*
[near Dunkeld

[twelve miles distant

Shall come against him.

[*Descends.*

Macb. That will never be :

Who can impress the forest, bid the tree

Macbeth

Unfix his earth-bound root? Sweet bodements!
good!

Rebellion's head, rise never, till the wood
Of Birnam rise, and our high-plac'd Macbeth
Shall live the lease of nature, pay his breath
To time and mortal custom. Yet my heart
Throbs to know one thing: tell me,—if your art
Can tell so much,—shall Banquo's issue ever
Reign in this kingdom?

All. Seek to know no more.

Macb. I will be satisfied: deny me this,
And an eternal curse fall on you! Let me know.
Why sinks that cauldron? and what noise is this?

[*Hautboys.*

1st Witch. Show!

2nd Witch. Show!

3rd Witch. Show!

All. Show his eyes, and grieve his heart;
Come like shadows, so depart!

*A show of eight Kings, the last with a glass in
his hand; Banquo's Ghost following.*

Macb. Thou art too like the spirit of Banquo;
down!

Thy crown does sear mine eyeballs. And thy
hair,

Thou other gold-bound brow, is like the first.

A third is like the former. Filthy hags!

Why do you show me this? A fourth! Start,
eyes!

What, will the line stretch out to the crack of
doom?

Another yet! A seventh! I'll see no more;
And yet the eighth appears, who bears a glass
Which shows me many more; and some I see
That twofold balls and treble sceptres carry:

Act IV Scene 1

Horrible sight!—Now I see 'tis true ;
For the blood-bolter'd* Banquo smiles [clotted
upon me,
And points at them for his.

[Apparitions vanish.

What, is this so?

1st Witch. Ay, sir, all this is so : but why
Stands Macbeth thus amazedly?
Come, sisters, cheer we up his sprights,
And show the best of our delights :
I'll charm the air to give a sound,
While you perform your antic round,
That this great king may kindly say,
Our duties did his welcome pay.

*[Music. The Witches dance, and then
vanish, with Hecate.*

Macb. Where are they? Gone? Let this
pernicious hour
Stand aye accursed in the calendar!—
Come in, without there!

Enter Lennox.

Len. What's your grace's will?

Macb. Saw you the weird sisters?

Len. No, my lord.

Macb. Came they not by you?

Len. No indeed, my lord.

Macb. Infected be the air whereon they ride;
And damn'd all those that trust them! I did
hear

The galloping of horse : who was't came by?

Len. 'Tis two or three, my lord, that bring
you word

Macduff is fled to England.

Macb. Fled to England!

Len. Ay, my good lord.

Macbeth

Macb. [*Aside*] Time, thou anticipat'st my
dread exploits :

The flighty purpose never is o'ertook
Unless the deed go with it. From this moment
The very firstlings of my heart shall be
The firstlings of my hand. And even now,
To crown my thoughts with acts, be it thought
and done :

The castle of Macduff I will surprise,
Seize upon Fife, give to the edge o' the sword
His wife, his babes, and all unfortunate souls
That trace him in his line. No boasting like a
fool ;

This deed I'll do before this purpose cool.
But no more sights !—Where are these gentle-
men ?

Come, bring me where they are. [*Exeunt.*]

SCENE 2.—Fife. A Room in Macduff's Castle,

Enter Lady Macduff, her Son, and Ross.

L. Macd. What had he done, to make him fly
the land ?

Ross. You must have patience, madam.

L. Macd. He had none ;
His flight was madness : when our actions do
not,

Our fears do make us traitors.

Ross. You know not
Whether it was his wisdom or his fear.

L. Macd. Wisdom ! to leave his wife, to leave
his babes,
His mansion and his titles, in a place
From whence himself does fly ? He loves us not ;
He wants the natural touch : for the poor wren,
The most diminutive of birds, will fight,

Act IV Scene 2

Her young ones in her nest, against the owl.
All is the fear, and nothing is the love ;
As little is the wisdom, where the flight
So runs against all reason.

Ross. My dearest coz,
I pray you, school yourself : but for your husband,
He is noble, wise, judicious, and best knows
The fits o' the season. I dare not speak much
further ;
But cruel are the times, when we are traitors
And do not know ourselves ; when we hold
rumour
From what we fear, yet know not what we fear,
But float upon a wild and violent sea
Each way and move. I take my leave of you ;
Shall not be long but I'll be here again.
Things at the worst will cease, or else climb
upward
To what they were before. My pretty cousin,
Blessing upon you !

L. Macd. Father'd he is, and yet he's fatherless.

Ross. I am so much a fool, should I stay
longer,
It would be my disgrace and your discomfort :
I take my leave at once. [Exit.]

L. Macd. Sirrah, your father's dead :
And what will you do now ? How will you live ?

Son. As birds do, mother.

L. Macd. What, with worms and flies ?

Son. With what I get, I mean ; and so do they.

L. Macd. Poor bird ! thou'dst never fear the
net nor lime,
The pitfall nor the gin.

Son. Why should I, mother ? Poor birds they
are not set for.

Macbeth

My father is not dead, for all your saying.

L. Macd. Yes, he is dead : how wilt thou do for a father ?

Son. Nay, how will you do for a husband ?

L. Macd. Why, I can buy me twenty at any market.

Son. Then you 'll buy 'em to sell again.

L. Macd. Thou speak'st with all thy wit, and yet, i' faith,

With wit enough for thee.

Son. Was my father a traitor, mother ?

L. Macd. Ay, that he was.

Son. What is a traitor ?

L. Macd. Why, one that swears and lies.

Son. And be all traitors that do so ?

L. Macd. Every one that does so is a traitor, and must be hanged.

Son. And must they all be hanged that swear and lie ?

L. Macd. Every one.

Son. Who must hang them ?

L. Macd. Why, the honest men.

Son. Then the liars and swearers are fools, for there are liars and swearers enow to beat the honest men and hang up them.

L. Macd. Now, God help thee, poor monkey ! But how wilt thou do for a father ?

Son. If he were dead, you 'd weep for him : if you would not, it were a good sign that I should quickly have a new father.

L. Macd. Poor prattler, how thou talk'st !

Enter a Messenger.

Mess. Bless you, fair dame ! I am not to you known,
[well-informed]
Though in your state of honour I am perfect.*

Act IV Scene 3

I doubt some danger does approach you nearly:
If you will take a homely man's advice,
Be not found here; hence, with your little ones.
To fright you thus, methinks I am too savage;
To do worse to you were fell cruelty,
Which is too nigh your person. Heaven preserve
you!

I dare abide no longer. [Exit.

Lady M. Whither should I fly?
I have done no harm. But I remember now
I am in this earthly world, where to do harm
Is often laudable, to do good sometime
Accounted dangerous folly: why then, alas,
Do I put up that womanly defence,
To say I have done no harm?

Enter Murderers.

What are these faces?

1st Mur. Where is your husband?

Lady M. I hope, in no place so unsanctified
Where such as thou mayst find him.

1st Mur. He's a traitor.

Son. Thou liest, thou shag-hair'd villain!

1st Mur. What, you egg!
[Stabbing him.

Young fry of treachery!

Son. He has kill'd me, mother:
Run away, I pray you! [Dies.

[Exit Lady Macduff, crying 'Murther!']

Exeunt Murderers, following her.

SCENE 3.—England. Before the King's Palace.

Enter Malcolm and Macduff.

Mal. Let us seek out some desolate shade, and
there

Weep our sad bosoms empty.

Macbeth

Macd. Let us rather
Hold fast the mortal sword, and like good men
Bestride* our down-fallen birthdom. Each ^{[protect}
new morn

New widows howl, new orphans cry, new sorrows
Strike heaven on the face, that it resounds
As if it felt with Scotland and yell'd out
Like syllable* of dolour. [cry

Mal. What I believe, I'll wail;
What know, believe; and what I can redress,
As I shall find the time to friend, I will.
What you have spoke, it may be so perchance.
This tyrant, whose sole name blisters our
tongues,
Was once thought honest: you have lov'd him
well;
He hath not touch'd you yet. I am young; but
something
You may deserve of him through me, and
wisdom
To offer up a weak poor innocent lamb
To appease an angry god.

Macd. I am not treacherous.

Mal. But Macbeth is.
A good and virtuous nature may recoil* ^{[degenerate}
In an imperial charge.* ^{[when charged with royal state}
But I shall crave your pardon;
That which you are my thoughts cannot trans-
pose;
Angels are bright still, though the brightest fell;
Though all things foul would wear the brows
of grace,
Yet grace must still look so.

Macd. I have lost my hopes.

Mal. Perchance even there where I did find
my doubts.

Act IV Scene 3

Why in that rawness left you wife and child,
Those precious motives, those strong knots of
love,

Without leave-taking? I pray you,
Let not my jealousies be your dishonours,
But mine own safeties: you may be rightly just,
Whatever I shall think.

Macd. Bleed, bleed, poor country!
Great tyranny, lay thou thy basis sure,
For goodness dare not check thee! wear thou
thy wrongs;

The title is affeer'd*!—Fare thee well, [established
lord:

I would not be the villain that thou think'st
For the whole space that's in the tyrant's grasp,
And the rich East to boot.

Mal. Be not offended:
I speak not as in absolute fear of you.
I think our country sinks beneath the yoke;
It weeps, it bleeds, and each new day a gash
Is added to her wounds: I think withal
There would be hands uplifted in my right;
And here from gracious England have I offer
Of goodly thousands; but for all this,
When I shall tread upon the tyrant's head,
Or wear it on my sword, yet my poor country
Shall have more vices than it had before,
More suffer, and more sundry ways than ever,
By him that shall succeed.

Macd. What should he be?

Mal. It is myself I mean; in whom I know
All the particulars of vice so grafted
That, when they shall be open'd, black Macbeth
Will seem as pure as snow, and the poor state
Esteem him as a lamb, being compar'd
With my confineless harms.

Macbeth

Macd. Not in the legions
Of horrid hell can come a devil more damn'd
In evils to top Macbeth.

Mal. I grant him bloody,
Luxurious, avaricious, false, deceitful,
Sudden, malicious, smacking of every sin
That has a name; but there's no bottom, none,
In my voluptuousness: your wives, your
daughters,

Your matrons and your maids, could not fill up
The cistern of my lust, and my desire
All continent impediments would o'erbear
That did oppose my will. Better Macbeth
Than such an one to reign.

Macd. Boundless intemperance
In nature is a tyranny; it hath been
The untimely emptying of the happy throne,
And fall of many kings. But fear not yet
To take upon you what is yours; you may
Convey your pleasures in a spacious plenty,
And yet seem cold, the time you may so hood-
wink.

We have willing dames enough; there cannot be
That vulture in you, to devour so many
As will to greatness dedicate themselves,
Finding it so inclin'd.

Mal. With this there grows
In my most ill-compos'd affection such
A stanchless avarice that, were I king,
I should cut off the nobles for their lands,
Desire his jewels and this other's house;
And my more-having would be as a sauce
To make me hunger more, that I should forge
Quarrels unjust against the good and loyal,
Destroying them for wealth.

Macd. This avarice

Act IV Scene 3

Sticks deeper, grows with more pernicious root
Than summer-seeming lust, and it hath been
The sword of our slain kings : yet do not fear ;
Scotland hath foisons* to fill up your will, ^{plenty}
Of your mere own. All these are portable,
With other graces weigh'd.

Mal. But I have none : the king-becoming
graces,
As justice, verity, temperance, stableness,
Bounty, perseverance, mercy, lowliness,
Devotion, patience, courage, fortitude,
I have no relish of them, but abound
In the division of each several crime,
Acting it many ways. Nay, had I power, I should
Pour the sweet milk of concord into hell,
Uproar the universal peace, confound
All unity on earth.

Macd. O Scotland, Scotland !

Mal. If such a one be fit to govern, speak :
I am as I have spoken.

Macd. Fit to govern !
No, not to live.—O nation miserable !
With an untitled tyrant bloody-scepter'd
When shalt thou see thy wholesome days again,
Since that the truest issue of thy throne
By his own interdiction stands accurs'd,
And does blaspheme his breed?—Thy royal
father
Was a most sainted king : the queen that bore
thee,

Oftener upon her knees than on her feet,
Died every day she liv'd. Fare thee well !
These evils thou repeat'st upon thyself
Have banish'd me from Scotland.—O my breast,
Thy hope ends here !

Mal. Macduff, this noble passion,

Macbeth

Child of integrity, hath from my soul
Wip'd the black scruples, reconcil'd my thoughts
To thy good truth and honour. Devilish Mac-
beth

By many of these trains* hath sought to [lures
win me

Into his power, and modest wisdom plucks me
From over-credulous haste : but God above
Deal between thee and me ! for even now

I put myself to thy direction, and
Unspeak mine own detraction, here abjure
The taints and blames I laid upon myself,
For strangers to my nature. I am yet

Unknown to woman, never was forsworn,
Scarcely have coveted what was mine own,
At no time broke my faith, would not betray
The devil to his fellow, and delight

No less in truth than life : my first false speaking
Was this upon myself. What I am truly,

Is thine and my poor country's to command ;
Whither indeed, before thy here-approach,
Old Siward, with ten thousand warlike men,

Already at a point,* was setting forth. [prepared
Now we'll together, and the chance of good-
ness*

Be like our warranted quarrel*! Why are you
silent? [equal our righteous cause

Macd. Such welcome and unwelcome things
at once

'Tis hard to reconcile.

Enter a Doctor.

Mal. Well, more anon.— Comes the king forth
I pray you?

Doct. Ay, sir ; there are a crew of wretched
souls

Act IV Scene 3

That stay his cure*: their malady [wait to be cured
convinces* [defies

The great assay of art; but at his touch,
Such sanctity hath heaven given his hand,
They presently amend.

Mal. I thank you, doctor.

[*Exit Doctor.*

Macd. What's the disease he means?

Mal. 'Tis call'd the evil:
A most miraculous work in this good king;
Which often, since my here-remain in England,
I have seen him do. How he solicits heaven,
Himself best knows: but strangely-visited people,
All swoln and ulcerous, pitiful to the eye,
The mere despair of surgery, he cures,
Hanging a golden stamp about their necks,
Put on with holy prayers; and 'tis spoken,
To the succeeding royalty he leaves
The healing benediction. With this strange
virtue,
He hath a heavenly gift of prophecy,
And sundry blessings hang about his throne
That speak him full of grace.

Enter Ross.

Macd. See, who comes here?

Mal. My countryman; but yet I know him
not.

Macd. My ever-gentle cousin, welcome hither.

Mal. I know him now. Good God, betimes
remove

The means that makes us strangers!

Ross. Sir, amen.

Macd. Stands Scotland where it did?

Ross. Alas, poor country!
Almost afraid to know itself. It cannot

Macbeth

Be call'd our mother, but our grave; where
nothing,

But who knows nothing, is once seen to smile;
Where sighs and groans and shrieks that rent
the air

Are made, not mark'd; where violent sorrow
seems

A modern ecstasy: the dead man's knell
Is there scarce ask'd for who; and good men's
lives

Expire before the flowers in their caps,
Dying or ere they sicken.

Macd. O, relation

Too nice, and yet too true!

Mal. What's the newest grief?

Ross. That of an hour's age doth hiss the
speaker;

Each minute teems a new one.

Macd. How does my wife?

Ross. Why, well.

Macd. And all my children?

Ross. Well too!

Macd. The tyrant has not batter'd at their
peace?

Ross. No; they were well at peace when I did
leave 'em.

Macd. Be not a niggard of your speech: how
goes't?

Ross. When I came hither to transport the
tidings,

Which I have heavily borne, there ran a rumour
Of many worthy fellows that were out*; [in the field
Which was to my belief witness'd* the [made credible
rather,

For that I saw the tyrant's power a-foot.
Now is the time of help; your eye in Scotland

Act IV Scene 3

Would create soldiers, make our women fight,
To doff their dire distresses.

Mal. Be't their comfort
We are coming thither : gracious England hath
Lent us good Siward and ten thousand men ;
An older and a better soldier none
That Christendom gives out.

Ross. Would I could answer
This comfort with the like ! But I have words
That would be howl'd out in the desert air,
Where hearing should not latch* them. [catch

Macd. What concern they ?
The general cause ? or is it a fee-grief* [peculiar grief
Due to some single breast ?

Ross. No mind that's honest
But in it shares some woe, though the main part
Pertains to you alone.

Macd. If it be mine,
Keep it not from me, quickly let me have it.

Ross. Let not your ears despise my tongue for
ever,
Which shall possess them with the heaviest
sound
That ever yet they heard.

Macd. Hum ! I guess at it.

Ross. Your castle is surpris'd ; your wife and
babes
Savagely slaughter'd : to relate the manner,
Were, on the quarry* of these murther'd deer,
To add the death of you. [dead bodies

Mal. Mereiful heaven !
What, man ! ne'er pull your hat upon your
brows ;
Give sorrow words : the grief that does not speak
Whispers the o'er-fraught heart, and bids it
break.

Macbeth

Macd. My children too?

Ross. Wife, children, servants, all
That could be found.

Macd. And I must be from thence!
My wife kill'd too?

Ross. I have said.

Mal. Be comforted :
Let's make us medicines of our great revenge,
To cure this deadly grief.

Macd. He has no children.—All my pretty
ones?
Did you say all?—O hell-kite!—All?
What, all my pretty chickens and their dam
At one fell swoop?

Mal. Dispute it like a man.

Macd. I shall do so ;
But I must also feel it as a man :
I cannot but remember such things were,
That were most precious to me.—Did heaven
look on,
And would not take their part? Sinful Macduff,
They were all struck for thee! naught that
I am,
Not for their own demerits, but for mine,
Fell slaughter on their souls. Heaven rest them
now!

Mal. Be this the whetstone of your sword : let
grief
Convert to anger ; blunt not the heart, enrage it.

Macd. O, I could play the woman with mine
eyes,
And braggart with my tongue! But, gentle
heavens,
Cut short all intermission ; front to front
Bring thou this fiend of Scotland and myself ;
Within my sword's length set him ; if he scape,

Act V Scene 1

Heaven forgive him too!

Mal. This tune goes manly.
Come, go we to the king : our power is ready ;
Our lack is nothing but our leave. Macbeth
Is ripe for shaking, and the powers above
Put on* their instruments. Receive [set to work
what cheer you may ;
The night is long that never finds the day.
[*Exeunt.*

ACT V.

SCENE 1.—Dunsinane. A Room in the Castle.

*Enter a Doctor of Physic and a Waiting
Gentlewoman.*

Doct. I have two nights watched with you,
but can perceive no truth in your report. When
was it she last walked?

Gent. Since his majesty went into the field,
I have seen her rise from her bed, throw her
nightgown upon her, unlock her closet, take
forth paper, fold it, write upon't, read it,
afterwards seal it, and again return to bed ;
yet all this while in a most fast sleep.

Doct. A great perturbation in nature, to re-
ceive at once the benefit of sleep and do the
effects of watching! In this slumbery agita-
tion, besides her walking and other actual per-
formances, what at any time have you heard
her say?

Gent. That, sir, which I will not report after
her.

Doct. You may to me, and 'tis most meet you
should.

Gent. Neither to you nor any one, having no
witness to confirm my speech.

Macbeth

Enter Lady Macbeth, with a taper.

Lo you, here she comes ! This is her very guise ;
and, upon my life, fast asleep. Observe her ;
stand close.

Doct. How came she by that light ?

Gent. Why, it stood by her : she has light by
her continually ; 'tis her command.

Doct. You see, her eyes are open.

Gent. Ay, but their sense is shut.

Doct. What is it she does now ? Look, how
she rubs her hands.

Gent. It is an accustomed action with her, to
seem thus washing her hands : I have known
her continue in this a quarter of an hour.

Lady M. Yet here's a spot.

Doct. Hark ! she speaks : I will set down what
comes from her, to satisfy my remembrance the
more strongly.

Lady M. Out, damn'd spot ! out, I say !—One :
two : why, then 'tis time to do 't. Hell is murky !
Fie, my lord, fie ! a soldier, and afeard ? What
need we fear who knows it, when none can call
our power to account ? Yet who would have
thought the old man to have had so much blood
in him ?

Doct. Do you mark that ?

Lady M. The thane of Fife had a wife : where
is she now ?—What, will these hands ne'er be
clean ?—No more o' that, my lord, no more o'
that : you mar all with this starting.

Doct. Go to, go to ; you have known what you
should not.

Gent. She has spoke what she should not, I
am sure of that : heaven knows what she has
known.

Lady M. Here's the smell of the blood still :

Act V Scene 1

all the perfumes of Arabia will not sweeten this little hand. Oh, oh, oh!

Doct. What a sigh is there! The heart is sorely charged.

Gent. I would not have such a heart in my bosom for the dignity of the whole body.

Doct. Well, well, well,—

Gent. Pray God it be, sir.

Doct. This disease is beyond my practice: yet I have known those which have walked in their sleep who have died holily in their beds.

Lady M. Wash your hands, put on your night-gown; look not so pale.—I tell you yet again, Banquo's buried; he cannot come out on's grave.

Doct. Even so?

Lady M. To bed, to bed! there's knocking at the gate: come, come, come, come, give me your hand. What's done cannot be undone. To bed, to bed, to bed! [Exit.

Doct. Will she go now to bed?

Gent. Directly.

Doct. Foul whisperings are abroad. Unnatural deeds

Do breed unnatural troubles: infected minds
To their deaf pillows will discharge their secrets.
More needs she the divine than the physician.—
God, God forgive us all!—Look after her;
Remove from her the means of all annoyance,
And still keep eyes upon her. So, good night:
My mind she has mated,* and amaz'd [bewildered
my sight.

I think, but dare not speak.

Gent.

Good night, good doctor.

[Exeunt.

Macbeth

SCENE 2.—The Country near Dunsinane.

Drum and colours. Enter Menteith, Caithness, Angus, Lennox, and Soldiers.

Ment. The English power is near, led on by
Malcolm,

His uncle Siward, and the good Macduff.
Revenge burn in them; for their dear causes
Would to the bleeding and the grim alarm
Excite the mortified man.

Ang. Near Birnam wood
Shall we well meet them; that way are they
coming.

Caith. Who knows if Donalbain be with his
brother?

Len. For certain, sir, he is not. I have a file
Of all the gentry: there is Siward's son, [beardless
And many unrough* youths, that even now
Protest their first of manhood.

Ment. What does the tyrant?

Caith. Great Dunsinane he strongly fortifies.
Some say he's mad; others, that lesser hate
him,

Do call it valiant fury: but, for certain,
He cannot buckle his distemper'd cause
Within the belt of rule.

Ang. Now does he feel
His secret murders sticking on his hands;
Now minutely revolts upbraid his faith-breach:
Those he commands move only in command,
Nothing in love; now does he feel his title
Hang loose about him, like a giant's robe
Upon a dwarfish thief.

Ment. Who then shall blame
His pester'd* senses to recoil and start, [troubled
When all that is within him does condemn

Act V Scene 3

Itself for being there?

Caith. Well, march we on,
To give obedience where 'tis truly owed :
Meet we the medicine of the sickly weal,
And with him pour we in our country's purge
Each drop of us.

Len. Or so much as it needs,
To dew the sovereign flower and drown the
weeds.

Make we our march towards Birnam.

[Exeunt, marching.]

SCENE 3.—Dunsinane. A Room in the Castle.

Enter Macbeth, Doctor, and Attendants.

Macb. Bring me no more reports ; let them fly
all :

Till Birnam wood remove to Dunsinane,
I cannot taint with fear. What's the boy
Malcolm?

Was he not born of woman? The spirits that
know

All mortal consequences have pronounc'd me
thus :

'Fear not, Macbeth ; no man that's born of
woman

Shall e'er have power upon thee.' Then fly,
false thanes,

And mingle with the English epicures :

The mind I sway by and the heart I bear

Shall never sag* with doubt nor shake with *[droop]*
fear.

Enter a Servant.

The devil damn thee black, thou cream-fac'd
loon !

Where got'st thou that goose look ?

Macbeth

Serv. There is ten thousand—

Macb. Geese, villain?

Serv. Soldiers, sir.

Macb. Go prick thy face, and over-red thy
fear,

Thou lily-liver'd boy. What soldiers, patch?
Death of thy soul! those linen cheeks of thine
Are counsellors to fear. What soldiers, whey-
face?

Serv. The English force, so please you.

Macb. Take thy face hence. [*Exit Servant.*
Seyton! I am sick at heart,
When I behold—Seyton, I say!—This push
Will cheer me ever, or disseat* me now. [*unseat*

I have liv'd long enough : my way of life
Is fallen into the sear, the yellow leaf,
And that which should accompany old age,
As honour, love, obedience, troops of friends,
I must not look to have ; but, in their stead,
Curses, not loud but deep, mouth-honour, breath,
Which the poor heart would fain deny, and
dare not.

Seyton!

Enter Seyton.

Sey. What's your gracious pleasure?

Macb. What news more?

Sey. All is confirm'd, my lord, which was
reported.

Macb. I'll fight till from my bones my flesh
be hack'd.

Give me my armour.

Sey. 'Tis not needed yet.

Macb. I'll put it on.

Send out moe horses, skirr the country round ;
Hang those that talk of fear. Give me mine
armour.—

Act V Scene 3

How does your patient, doctor?

Doct. Not so sick, my lord,
As she is troubled with thick-coming fancies,
That keep her from her rest.

Macb. Cure her of that.
Canst thou not minister to a mind diseas'd,
Pluck from the memory a rooted sorrow,
Raze out the written troubles of the brain,
And with some sweet oblivious antidote
Cleanse the stuff'd bosom of that perilous stuff
Which weighs upon the heart?

Doct. Therein the patient
Must minister to himself.

Macb. Throw physic to the dogs, I'll none
of it.
Come, put mine armour on ; give me my staff.—
Seyton, send out.—Doctor, the thanes fly from
me.—

Come, sir, dispatch.—If thou couldst, doctor,
cast
The water of my land, find her disease,
And purge it to a sound and pristine health,
I would applaud thee to the very echo,
That should applaud again. Pull 't off, I say.
What rhubarb, senna, or what purgative drug,
Would scour these English hence? Hear'st
thou of them?

Doct. Ay, my good lord ; your royal prepara-
tion
Makes us hear something.

Macb. Bring it after me.
I will not be afraid of death and bane
Till Birnam forest come to Dunsinane. [*Exit.*

Doct. Were I from Dunsinane away and clear,
Profit again should hardly draw me here. [*Exit.*

Macbeth

SCENE 4.—Country near Birnam Wood.

Drum and colours. Enter Malcolm, old Siward and his Son, Macduff, Menteith, Caithness, Angus, Lennox, Ross, and Soldiers, marching.

Mal. Cousins, I hope the days are near at hand

That chambers will be safe.

Ment. We doubt it nothing.

Siw. What wood is this before us?

Ment. The wood of Birnam.

Mal. Let every soldier hew him down a bough,
And bear't before him; thereby shall we shadow
The numbers of our host, and make discovery
Err in report of us.

Soldiers. It shall be done.

Siw. We learn no other but the confident
tyrant

Keeps still in Dunsinane, and will endure
Our setting down before 't.

Mal. 'Tis his main hope;
For where there is advantage to be given,
Both more and less have given him the revolt,
And none serve with him but constrained things
Whose hearts are absent too.

Macd. Let our just censures
Attend the true event, and put we on
Industrious soldiership.

Siw. The time approaches
That will with due decision make us know
What we shall say we have and what we owe.
Thoughts speculative their unsure hopes relate,
But certain issue strokes must arbitrate;
Towards which advance the war.

[*Exeunt, marching.*

Act V Scene 5

SCENE 5.—Dunsinane. Within the Castle.

Enter Macbeth, Seyton, and Soldiers, with drum and colours.

Macb. Hang out our banners on the outward walls ;

The cry is still 'They come!' Our castle's strength

Will laugh a siege to scorn ; here let them lie

Till famine and the ague eat them up.

Were they not forc'd* with those that [reinforced
should be ours,

We might have met them dareful, beard to
beard,

And beat them backward home.

[*A cry of women within.*

What is that noise?

Sey. It is a cry of women, my good lord. [*Exit.*

Macb. I have almost forgot the taste of fears :
The time has been, my senses would have cool'd
To hear a night-shriek, and my fell of hair
Would at a dismal treatise rouse and stir
As life were in't. I have supp'd full with horrors ;
Direness, familiar to my slaughterous thoughts,
Cannot once start me.

Re-enter Seyton.

Wherefore was that cry?

Sey. The queen, my lord, is dead.

Macb. She should have died hereafter ;
There would have been a time for such a word.
To-morrow, and to-morrow, and to-morrow,
Creeps in this petty pace from day to day
To the last syllable of recorded time,
And all our yesterdays have lighted fools
The way to dusty death. Out, out, brief candle!
Life's but a walking shadow, a poor player

Macbeth

That struts and frets his hour upon the stage
And then is heard no more ; it is a tale
Told by an idiot, full of sound and fury,
Signifying nothing.



Enter a Messenger.

Thou com'st to use thy tongue ; thy story quickly.

Mess. Gracious my lord,
I should report that which I say I saw,
But know not how to do it.

Macb. Well, say, sir.

Mess. As I did stand my watch upon the hill,
I look'd toward Birnam, and anon, methought,
The wood began to move.

Macb. Liar and slave !

Mess. Let me endure your wrath, if't be not so :
Within this three mile may you see it coming ;
I say, a moving grove.

Macb. If thou speak'st false,
Upon the next tree shalt thou hang alive
Till famine cling* thee ; if thy speech be [shrivel up
sooth,

I care not if thou dost for me as much.
I pull in resolution, and begin
To doubt the equivocation of the fiend
That lies like truth : 'Fear not, till Birnam wood
Do come to Dunsinane ;' and now a wood
Comestoward Dunsinane.—Arm, arm, and out!—
If this which he avouches does appear,
There is nor flying hence nor tarrying here.
I 'gin to be aweary of the sun,
And wish the estate o' the world were now
undone.—

Ring the alarm-bell!—Blow, wind! come, wrack!
At least we'll die with harness on our back.

[*Exeunt.*

Act V Scene 7

SCENE 6.—Dunsinane. Before the Castle.

Drum and colours. Enter Malcolm, old Siward, Macduff, and their Army, with boughs.

Mal. Now near enough: your leavy screens
throw down,
And show like those you are.—You, worthy
uncle,
Shall with my cousin, your right-noble son,
Lead our first battle; worthy Macduff and we
Shall take upon's what else remains to do,
According to our order.

Siw. Fare you well.
Do we but find the tyrant's power to-night,
Let us be beaten, if we cannot fight.

Macd. Make all our trumpets speak; give
them all breath,
Those clamorous harbingers of blood and death.
[*Exeunt.*

SCENE 7.—Another Part of the Field.

Alarums. Enter Macbeth.

Macb. They have tied me to a stake; I cannot
fly,
But, bear-like, I must fight the course. What's he
That was not born of woman? Such a one
Am I to fear, or none.

Enter Young Siward.

Yo. Siw. What is thy name?

Macb. Thou'lt be afraid to hear it.

Yo. Siw. No; though thou call'st thyself a
hotter name
Than any is in hell.

Macb. My name's Macbeth.

Yo. Siw. The devil himself could not pro-
nounce a title

Macbeth

More hateful to mine ear.

Macb. No, nor more fearful.

Yo. Siw. Thou liest, abhorred tyrant; with
my sword

I'll prove the lie thou speak'st.

[*They fight, and young Siward is slain.*]

Macb. Thou wast born of woman.—

But swords I smile at, weapons laugh to scorn,
Brandish'd by man that's of a woman born.

[*Exit.*]

Alarums. Enter Macduff.

Macd. That way the noise is.—Tyrant, show
thy face!

If thou be'st slain and with no stroke of mine,
My wife and children's ghosts will haunt me still.
I cannot strike at wretched kerns, whose arms
Are hir'd to bear their staves: either thou,
Macbeth,

Or else my sword with an unbatter'd edge
I sheathe again undeeded. There thou shouldst
be;

By this great clatter, one of greatest note
Seems bruited. Let me find him, fortune!
And more I beg not. [*Exit. Alarums.*]

Enter Malcolm and old Siward.

Siw. This way, my lord. The castle's gently
render'd:

The tyrant's people on both sides do fight;
The noble thanes do bravely in the war;
The day almost itself professes yours,
And little is to do.

Mal. We have met with foes
That strike beside us.

Siw. Enter, sir, the castle.

[*Exeunt. Alarum.*]

Act V Scene 8

SCENE 8.—Another Part of the Field.

Enter Macbeth.

Macb. Why should I play the Roman fool,
and die
On mine own sword? whiles I see lives, the
gashes
Do better upon them.

Enter Macduff.

Macd. Turn, hell-hound, turn!

Macb. Of all men else I have avoided thee:
But get thee back; my soul is too much charg'd
With blood of thine already.

Macd. I have no words;
My voice is in my sword, thou bloodier villain
Than terms can give thee out! [*They fight.*

Macb. Thou lovest labour.
As easy mayst thou the intrenchant* [invulnerable
air

With thy keen sword impress as make me bleed:
Let fall thy blade on vulnerable crests;
I bear a charmed life, which must not yield
To one of woman born.

Macd. Despair thy charm,
And let the angel whom thou still hast serv'd
Tell thee, Macduff was from his mother's womb
Untimely ripp'd.

Macb. Accursed be that tongue that tells me so,
For it hath cow'd my better part of man!
And be these juggling fiends no more believ'd,
That palter* with us in a double sense; [equivocate
That keep the word of promise to our ear,
And break it to our hope.—I'll not fight with
thee.

Macd. Then yield thee, coward,
And live to be the show and gaze o' the time:

Macbeth

We'll have thee, as our rarer monsters are,
Painted upon a pole, and underwrit,
'Here may you see the tyrant.'

Macb. I will not yield,
To kiss the ground before young Malcolm's feet,
And to be baited with the rabble's curse.
Though Birnam wood be come to Dunsinane,
And thou oppos'd, being of no woman born,
Yet I will try the last. Before my body
I throw my warlike shield: lay on, Macduff,
And damn'd be him that first cries 'Hold,
enough!' [*Exeunt, fighting. Alarums.*]

*Retreat. Flourish. Enter, with drum and
colours, Malcolm, old Siward, Ross, the
other Thanes, and Soldiers.*

Mal. I would the friends we miss were safe
arriv'd.

Siw. Some must go off; and yet, by these I see,
So great a day as this is cheaply bought.

Mal. Macduff is missing, and your noble son.

Ross. Your son, my lord, has paid a soldier's
debt:

He only liv'd but till he was a man;
The which no sooner had his prowess confirm'd
In the unshrinking station where he fought,
But like a man he died.

Siw. Then he is dead?

Ross. Ay, and brought off the field: your
cause of sorrow

Must not be measur'd by his worth, for then
It hath no end.

Siw. Had he his hurts before?

Ross. Ay, on the front.

Siw. Why then, God's soldier be he!
Had I as many sons as I have hairs,

Act V Scene 8

I would not wish them to a fairer death ;
And so his knell is knoll'd.

Mal. He's worth more sorrow,
And that I'll spend for him.

Sinc. He's worth no more :
They say he parted well and paid his score ;
And so God be with him ! Here comes newer
comfort.

Re-enter Macduff, with Macbeth's head.

Macd. Hail, king ! for so thou art. Behold,
where stands
The usurper's cursed head ; the time is free.
I see thee compass'd with thy kingdom's pearl,*
That speak my salutation in their minds ; [*?peers*
Whose voices I desire aloud with mine :
Hail, King of Scotland !

All. Hail, King of Scotland ! [*Flourish.*

Mal. We shall not spend a large expense of time
Before we reckon with your several loves,
And make us even with you. My thanes and
kinsmen,
Henceforth be earls, the first that ever Scotland
In such an honour nam'd. What's more to do,
Which would be planted newly with the time,—
As calling home our exil'd friends abroad
That fled the snares of watchful tyranny,
Producing forth the cruel ministers
Of this dead butcher and his fiend-like queen,
Who, as 'tis thought, by self and violent hands
Took off her life,—this, and what needful else
That calls upon us, by the grace of Grace
We will perform in measure, time, and place :
So, thanks to all at once and to each one,
Whom we invite to see us crown'd at Scone.

[*Flourish. Exeunt.*

THE
TRAGEDY OF HAMLET,
PRINCE OF DENMARK

DRAMATIS PERSONÆ.

CLAUDIUS, king of Denmark.

HAMLET, son to the late, and nephew to the present king.

POLONIUS, lord chamberlain.

HORATIO, friend to Hamlet.

LAERTES, son to Polonius.

VOLTIMAND,

CORNELIUS,

ROSENCRANTZ,

GUILDENSTERN,

} courtiers.

OSRIC,

A Gentleman,

A Priest.

MARCELLUS,

BERNARDO, } officers.

FRANCISCO, a soldier.

REYNALDO, servant to Polonius.

Players.

Two Clowns, grave-diggers.

FORTINBRAS, prince of Norway.

A Captain.

English Ambassadors.

GERTRUDE, queen of Denmark, and mother to Hamlet.

OPHELIA, daughter to Polonius.

Lords, Ladies, Officers, Soldiers, Sailors, Messengers, and
other Attendants.

Ghost of Hamlet's father.

SCENE : Elsinore.

THE
TRAGEDY OF HAMLET,
PRINCE OF DENMARK

ACT I.

SCENE I.—Elsinore. A Platform before
the Castle.

Francisco at his post. Enter to him Bernardo.

Ber. Who's there?

Fran. Nay, answer me; stand, and unfold
yourself.

Ber. Long live the king!

Fran. Bernardo?

Ber. He.

Fran. You come most carefully upon your hour.

Ber. 'Tis now struck twelve; get thee to bed,
Francisco.

Fran. For this relief much thanks; 'tis bitter
cold,

And I am sick at heart.

Ber. Have you had quiet guard?

Fran. Not a mouse stirring.

Ber. Well, good night.

If you do meet Horatio and Marcellus,
The rivals* of my watch, bid them make [companions
haste.

Fran. I think I hear them.—Stand, ho! Who
is there?

Enter Horatio and Marcellus.

Hor. Friends to this ground.

Hamlet

Mar. And liegemen to the Dane.

Fran. Give you good night.

Mar. O, farewell, honest soldier :
Who hath reliev'd you ?

Fran. Bernardo has my place.
Give you good night. *[Exit.*

Mar. Holla ! Bernardo !

Ber. Say,—

What, is Horatio there ?

Hor. A piece of him.

Ber. Welcome, Horatio ; welcome, good Marcellus.

Mar. What, has this thing appear'd again to-night ?

Ber. I have seen nothing.

Mar. Horatio says 'tis but our fantasy,
And will not let belief take hold of him
Touching this dreaded sight, twice seen of us ;
Therefore I have entreated him along
With us to watch the minutes of this night,
That if again this apparition come,
He may approve* our eyes and speak to it. *[confirm*

Hor. Tush, tush, 'twill not appear.

Ber. Sit down awhile ;
And let us once again assail your ears,
That are so fortified against our story,
What we two nights have seen.

Hor. Well, sit we down,
And let us hear Bernardo speak of this.

Ber. Last night of all,
When yond same star that's westward from
the pole
Had made his course to illume that part of
heaven
Where now it burns, Marcellus and myself,
The bell then beating one,—

Act I Scene 1

Enter Ghost.

Mar. Peace, break thee off; look, where it comes again!

Ber. In the same figure, like the king that's dead.

Mar. Thou art a scholar; speak to it, Horatio.

Ber. Looks it not like the king? mark it, Horatio.

Hor. Most like; it harrows me with fear and wonder.

Ber. It would be spoke to.

Mar. Question it, Horatio.

Hor. What art thou that usurp'st this time of night,

Together with that fair and warlike form
In which the majesty of buried Denmark
Did sometimes march? by heaven I charge thee,
speak!

Mar. It is offended.

Ber. See, it stalks away!

Hor. Stay! speak, speak! I charge thee, speak!
[*Exit Ghost.*]

Mar. 'Tis gone, and will not answer.

Ber. How now, Horatio! you tremble and look pale;

Is not this something more than fantasy?
What think you on't?

Hor. Before my God, I might not this believe

Without the sensible and true avouch
Of mine own eyes.

Mar. Is it not like the king?

Hor. As thou art to thyself:

Such was the very armour he had on
When he the ambitious Norway combated;
So frown'd he once, when, in an angry parle,

Hamlet

He smote the sledded Polacks* on [sledged Polanders
the ice.

'Tis strange.

Mar. Thus twice before, and jump* at this [just
dead hour,

With martial stalk hath he gone by our watch.

Hor. In what particular thought to work I
know not;

But in the gross and scope of my opinion,
This bodes some strange eruption to our state.

Mar. Good now, sit down, and tell me, he
that knows,

Why this same strict and most observant watch
So nightly toils the subject of the land,
And why such daily cast of brazen cannon,
And foreign mart for implements of war;
Why such impress of shipwrights, whose sore
task

Does not divide the Sunday from the week;
What might be toward, that this sweaty haste
Doth make the night joint-labourer with the day:
Who is't that can inform me?

Hor. That can I;

At least, the whisper goes so. Our last king,
Whose image even but now appear'd to us,
Was, as you know, by Fortinbras of Norway,
Thereto prick'd on by a most emulate pride,
Dar'd to the combat; in which our valiant
Hamlet—

For so this side of our known world esteem'd
him—

Did slay this Fortinbras; who, by a seal'd
compact,

Well ratified by law and heraldry,* [heraldic law
Did forfeit, with his life, all those his lands
Which he stood seiz'd* of, to the conqueror: [possessed

Act I Scene 1

Against the which a moiety competent*

[corresponding portion

Was gaged by our king ; which had return'd

To the inheritance of Fortinbras,

Had he been vanquisher ; as, by the same covenant

And carriage* of the article design'd, [tenor

His fell to Hamlet. Now, sir, young Fortinbras,

Of unimprov'd* mettle hot and full, [untutored

Hath in the skirts of Norway here and there

Shark'd up* a list of lawless resolute, [got hold of

For food and diet, to some enterprise

That hath a stomach in't ; which is no other—

As it doth well appear unto our state—

But to recover of us, by strong hand

And terms compulsative, those foresaid lands

So by his father lost : and this, I take it,

Is the main motive of our preparations,

The source of this our watch, and the chief head

Of this post-haste and romage* in the land. [rummage

Ber. I think it be no other but e'en so.

Well may it sort* that this portentous figure [suit

Comes armed through our watch, so like the king

That was and is the question of these wars.

Hor. A mote it is to trouble the mind's eye.

In the most high and palmy state of Rome,

A little ere the mightiest Julius fell,

The graves stood tenantless, and the sheeted dead

Did squeak and gibber in the Roman streets :

As stars with trains of fire and dews of blood,

Disasters in the sun ; and the moist star* [moon

Upon whose influence Neptune's empire stands

Was sick almost to doomsday* with [almost to death
eclipse :

And even the like precursor of fierce events,

sic

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ere

IN

Act I Scene 2

Awake the god of day ; and at his warning,
Whether in sea or fire, in earth or air,
The extravagant* and erring spirit hies [vagrant
To his confine : and of the truth herein
This present object made probation.

Mar. It faded on the crowing of the cock.
Some say that ever 'gainst that season comes
Wherein our Saviour's birth is celebrated,
The bird of dawning singeth all night long ;
And then, they say, no spirit can walk abroad,
The nights are wholesome, then no planets strike,
No fairy takes, nor witch hath power to charm,
So hallow'd and so gracious is the time.

Hor. So have I heard and do in part believe it.
But, look, the morn, in russet mantle clad,
Walk's o'er the dew of yon high eastern hill.
Break we our watch up ; and, by my advice,
Let us impart what we have seen to-night
Unto young Hamlet ; for, upon my life,
This spirit, dumb to us, will speak to him.
Do you consent we shall acquaint him with it,
As needful in our loves, fitting our duty ?

Mar. Let's do't, I pray ; and I this morning
know
Where we shall find him most conveniently.
[*Exeunt.*

SCENE 2.—A Room of State in the Castle.

*Enter the King, Queen, Hamlet, Polonius,
Laertes, Voltimand, Cornelius, Lords, and
Attendants.*

King. Though yet of Hamlet ourdear brother's
death
The memory be green, and that it us befitted
To bear our hearts in grief, and our whole
kingdom

Hamlet

To be contracted in one brow of woe,
Yet so far hath discretion fought with nature
That we with wisest sorrow think on him,
Together with remembrance of ourselves.
Therefore our sometime sister, now our queen,
The imperial jointress of this warlike state,
Have we, as 'twere with a defeated joy,—
With one auspicious and one dropping eye,
With mirth in funeral and with dirge in marriage,
In equal scale weighing delight and dole,*—[doleur
Taken to wife; nor have we herein barr'd
Your better wisdoms, which have freely gone
With this affair along. For all, our thanks.
Now follows, that you know, young Fortinbras,
Holding a weak supposal of our worth,
Or thinking by our late dear brother's death
Our state to be disjoint and out of frame,
Collegued with the dream of his advantage,
He hath not fail'd to pester us with message,
Importing the surrender of those lands
Lost by his father, with all bonds of law,
To our most valiant brother. So much for him.
Now for ourself, and for this time of meeting.
Thus much the business is: we have here writ
To Norway, uncle of young Fortinbras,—
Who, impotent and bed-rid, scarcely hears
Of this his nephew's purpose,—to suppress
His further gait* herein; in that the [proceeding
levies,
The lists, and full proportions, are all made
Out of his subject; and we here dispatch
You, good Cornelius, and you, Voltimand,
For bearers of this greeting to old Norway,
Giving to you no further personal power
To business with the king more than the scope
Of these dilated articles allow.

Act I Scene 2

Farewell, and let your haste commend your duty.

Cor. } In that and all things will we show our
Vol. } duty.

King. We doubt it nothing ; heartily farewell.

[Exeunt Voltimand and Cornelius.]

And now, Laertes, what's the news with you?
You told us of some suit ; what is't, Laertes?
You cannot speak of reason to the Dane,
And lose your voice ; what wouldst thou beg,
Laertes,

That shall not be my offer, not thy asking?
The head is not more native to the heart,
The hand more instrumental to the mouth,
Than is the throne of Denmark to thy father.
What wouldst thou have, Laertes?

Laer. Dread my lord,
Your leave and favour to return to France ;
From whence though willingly I came to Denmark,

To show my duty in your coronation,
Yet now, I must confess, that duty done,
My thoughts and wishes bend again toward
France

And bow them to your gracious leave and pardon.

King. Have you your father's leave? What
says Polonius?

Pol. He hath, my lord, wrung from me my
slow leave

By laboursome petition, and at last
Upon his will I seal'd my hard consent ;
I do beseech you, give him leave to go.

King. Take thy fair hour,* *[take your own time]*
Laertes ; time be thine,

And thy best graces spend it at thy will!—
But now, my cousin Hamlet, and my son,—

Hamlet

Ham. [*Aside*] A little more than kin, and less than kind.

King. How is it that the clouds still hang on you?

Ham. Not so, my lord; I am too much i' the sun.

Queen. Good Hamlet, cast thy nighted colour off,

And let thine eye look like a friend on Denmark.

Do not for ever with thy vailed* lids [lowered]

Seek for thy noble father in the dust.

Thou know'st 'tis common; all that lives must die,

Passing through nature to eternity.

Ham. Ay, madam, it is common.

Queen. If it be,

Why seems it so particular with thee?

Ham. Seems, madam! nay, it is; I know not 'seems.'

'Tis not alone my inky cloak, good mother,

Nor customary suits of solemn black,

Nor windy suspiration of forc'd breath,

No, nor the fruitful river in the eye,

Nor the dejected haviour of the visage,

Together with all forms, moods, shows of grief,

That can denote me truly; these indeed seem,

For they are actions that a man might play:

But I have that within which passeth show;

These but the trappings and the suits of woe.

King. 'Tis sweet and commendable in your nature, Hamlet,

To give these mourning duties to your father:

But, you must know, your father lost a father;

That father lost, lost his; and the survivor bound

In filial obligation for some term

To do obsequious* sorrow: but to persevere [funereal]

Act I Scene 2

In obstinate condolment* is a course [grief
Of impious stubbornness; 'tis unmanly grief;
It shows a will most incorrect to heaven,
A heart unfortified, a mind impatient,
An understanding simple and unschool'd:
For what we know must be and is as common
As any the most vulgar thing to sense,
Why should we in our peevish opposition
Take it to heart? Fie! 'tis a fault to heaven,
A fault against the dead, a fault to nature,
To reason most absurd; whose common theme
Is death of fathers, and who still hath cried,
From the first corse till he that died to-day,
'This must be so.' We pray you, throw to earth
This unprevailing woe, and think of us
As of a father; for let the world take note,
You are the most immediate to our throne,
And with no less nobility of love
Than that which dearest father bears his son
Do I impart toward you. For your intent
In going back to school in Wittenberg,
It is most retrograde to our desire;
And we beseech you, bend you to remain
Here, in the cheer and comfort of our eye,
Our chiefest courtier, cousin, and our son.

Queen. Let not thy mother lose her prayers,
Hamlet:

I pray thee, stay with us; go not to Witten-
berg.

Ham. I shall in all my best obey you, madam.

King. Why, 'tis a loving and a fair reply;
Be as ourself in Denmark.—Madam, come;
This gentle and unforc'd accord of Hamlet
Sits smiling to my heart: in grace whereof,
No jocund health that Denmark drinks to-day,
But the great cannon to the clouds shall tell,

Hamlet

And the king's rouse* the heavens shall [bumper
bruit again,

Respeaking earthly thunder.—Come away.

[*Exeunt all but Hamlet.*]

Ham. O that this too, too solid flesh would
melt,

Thaw and resolve itself into a dew!

Or that the Everlasting had not fix'd

His canon* 'gainst self-slaughter! O God! [law
O God!

How weary, stale, flat, and unprofitable
Seem to me all the uses of this world!

Fie on't! O fie! 'tis an unweeded garden,

That grows to seed; things rank and gross in
nature [absolutely

Possess it merely.* That it should come to this!

But two months dead! nay, not so much, not two:

So excellent a king; that was, to this,

Hyperion to a satyr; so loving to my mother

That he might not beteem* the winds of [suffer
heaven

Visit her face too roughly. Heaven and earth!

Must I remember? why, she would hang on him,

As if increase of appetite had grown

By what it fed on; and yet, within a month—

Let me not think on't—Frailty, thy name is
woman!

A little month, or ere those shoes were old

With which she follow'd my poor father's body,

Like Niobe, all tears,—why she, even she—

O God! a beast, that wants discourse of reason,*
[the reasoning faculty

Would have mourn'd longer—married with my
uncle,

My father's brother, but no more like my father

Than I to Hercules. Within a month?

Act I Scene 2

Ere yet the salt of most unrighteous tears
Had left the flushing in her galled eyes,
She married. O most wicked speed, to post
With such dexterity to incestuous sheets!
It is not, nor it cannot come to good;—
But break, my heart, for I must hold my tongue.

Enter Horatio, Marcellus, and Bernardo.

Hor. Hail to your lordship!

Ham. I am glad to see you well :
Horatio,—or I do forget myself.

Hor. The same, my lord, and your poor servant ever.

Ham. Sir, my good friend ; I'll change that name with you :
And what make* you from Wittenberg, [brings
Horatio?—

Marcellus?

Mar. My good lord—

Ham. I am very glad to see you. [*To Bernardo.*] Good even, sir.—

But what, in faith, make you from Wittenberg?

Hor. A truant disposition, good my lord.

Ham. I would not hear your enemy say so,
Nor shall you do mine ear that violence,
To make it truster of your own report
Against yourself ; I know you are no truant.
But what is your affair in Elsinore?

We'll teach you to drink deep ere you depart.

Hor. My lord, I came to see your father's funeral.

Ham. I pray thee, do not mock me, fellow-student ;

I think it was to see my mother's wedding.

Hor. Indeed, my lord, it follow'd hard upon.

Hamlet

Ham. Thrift, thrift, Horatio! the funeral bak'd
meats
Did coldly furnish forth the marriage tables.
Would I had met my dearest foe in heaven
Or ever I had seen that day, Horatio!
My father!—methinks I see my father.

Hor. O where, my lord?

Ham. In my mind's eye, Horatio.

Hor. I saw him once; he was a goodly king.

Ham. He was a man, take him for all in all,
I shall not look upon his like again.

Hor. My lord, I think I saw him yesternight.

Ham. Saw? who?

Hor. My lord, the king your father.

Ham. The king my father?

Hor. Season your admiration for a while
With an attent ear, till I may deliver,* [relate
Upon the witness of these gentlemen,
This marvel to you.

Ham. For God's love, let me hear.

Hor. Two nights together had these gentle-
men,
Marcellus and Bernardo, on their watch,
In the dead waste* and middle of the night, [void
Been thus encounter'd. A figure like your
father,

Armed at all points exactly, *cap-à-pé*,
Appears before them, and with solemn march
Goes slow and stately by them: thrice he walk'd
By their oppress'd and fear-surprised eyes,
Within his truncheon's length; whilst they,
distill'd

Almost to jelly with the act of fear,
Stand dumb, and speak not to him. This to me
In dreadful secrecy impart they did;
And I with them the third night kept the watch:

Act I Scene 2

Where, as they had deliver'd, both in time,
Form of the thing, each word made true and
good,

The apparition comes. I knew your father ;
These hands are not more like.

Ham. But where was this?

Mar. My lord, upon the platform where we
watch'd.

Ham. Did you not speak to it?

Hor. My lord, I did ;

But answer made it none : yet once methought
It lifted up its head and did address
Itself to motion, like as it would speak ;
But even then the morning cock crew loud,
And at the sound it shrunk in haste away,
And vanish'd from our sight.

Ham. 'Tis very strange.

Hor. As I do live, my honour'd lord, 'tis true ;
And we did think it writ down in our duty
To let you know of it.

Ham. Indeed, indeed, sirs, but this troubles me.
Hold you the watch to-night?

Mar. } We do, my lord.
Ber. }

Ham. Arm'd, say you?

Mar. } Arm'd, my lord.
Ber. }

Ham. From top to toe?

Mar. } My lord, from head to foot.
Ber. }

Ham. Then saw you not his face?

Hor. O, yes, my lord ; he wore his beaver up.

Ham. What, look'd he frowningly?

Hor. A countenance more in sorrow than in
anger.

Ham. Pale, or red?

Hamlet

Hor. Nay, very pale.

Ham. And fix'd his eyes upon you?

Hor. Most constantly.

Ham. I would I had been there.

Hor. It would have much amaz'd you.

Ham. Very like, very like. Stay'd it long?

Hor. While one with moderate haste might
tell a hundred.

Mar. } Longer, longer.
Ber. }

Hor. Not when I saw 't.

Ham. His beard was grizzled? no?

Hor. It was, as I have seen it in his life,
A sable silver'd.

Ham. I'll watch to-night;
Perchance 'twill walk again.

Hor. I warrant it will.

Ham. If it assume my noble father's person,
I'll speak to it, though hell itself should gape
And bid me hold my peace. I pray you all,
If you have hitherto conceal'd this sight,
Let it be tenable in your silence still;
And whatsoever else shall hap to-night,
Give it an understanding, but no tongue:
I will requite your loves. So, fare you well;
Upon the platform, 'twixt eleven and twelve,
I'll visit you.

All. Our duty to your honour.

Ham. Your loves, as mine to you; farewell.

[*Exeunt all but Hamlet.*]

My father's spirit in arms! all is not well;
I doubt some foul play: would the night were
come!

Till then sit still, my soul; foul deeds will rise,
Though all the earth o'erwhelm them, to men's
eves.

[*Exit.*]

Act I Scene 3

SCENE 3.—A Room in Polonius's House.

Enter Laertes and Ophelia.

Laer. My necessities are embark'd ; farewell ;
And, sister, as the winds give benefit
And convoy is assistant, do not sleep,
But let me hear from you.

Oph. Do you doubt that ?

Laer. For Hamlet and the trifling of his favour,
Hold it a fashion and a toy in blood,
A violet in the youth of primy nature,
Forward, not permanent, sweet, not lasting,
The perfume and suppliance of a minute ;
No more.

Oph. No more but so ?

Laer. Think it no more ;
For nature crescent does not grow alone
In thews and bulk, but, as this temple waxes,
The inward service of the mind and soul
Grows wide withal. Perhaps he loves you now,
And now no soil nor cautel* doth besmirch [craft]
The virtue of his will ; but you must fear,
His greatness weigh'd, his will is not his own ;
For he himself is subject to his birth.
He may not, as unvalued persons do,
Carve for himself, for on his choice depends
The safety and health of this whole state ;
And therefore must his choice be circumscrib'd
Unto the voice and yielding of that body
Whereof he is the head. Then if he says he
loves you,

It fits your wisdom so far to believe it
As he in his particular act and place
May give his saying deed ; which is no further
Than the main voice of Denmark goes withal.
Then weigh what loss your honour may sustain,

Hamlet

If with too credent ear you list his songs,
Or lose your heart, or your chaste treasure open
To his unmaster'd importunity.

Fear it, Ophelia, fear it, my dear sister,
And keep you in the rear of your affection,
Out of the shot and danger of desire.

The chariest maid is prodigal enough,
If she unmask her beauty to the moon.

Virtue itself scapes not calumnious strokes;
The canker galls the infants of the spring,
Too oft before their buttons be disclos'd;
And in the morn and liquid dew of youth
Contagious blastments* are most imminent.

Be wary then; best safety lies in fear: [blights
Youth to itself rebels, though none else near.

Oph. I shall the effect of this good lesson
keep,

As watchman to my heart. But, good my
brother,

Do not, as some ungracious pastors do,
Show me the steep and thorny way to heaven,
Whiles, like a puff'd and reckless libertine,
Himself the primrose path of dalliance treads,
And recks not his own rede.* [counsel

Laer.

O, fear me not.

I stay too long; but here my father comes.

Enter Polonius.

A double blessing is a double grace;
Occasion smiles upon a second leave.

Pol. Yet here, Laertes! aboard, aboard, for
shame!

The wind sits in the shoulder of your sail,
And you are stay'd for. There; my blessing
with thee!

And these few precepts in thy memory

Act I Scene 3

See thou character.* Give thy thoughts [write
no tongue,

Nor any unproportion'd thought his act.

Be thou familiar, but by no means vulgar.

Those friends thou hast, and their adoption tried,
Grapple them to thy soul with hoops of steel ;
But do not dull thy palm with entertainment
Of each new-hatch'd, unfledg'd comrade. Be-
ware

Of entrance to a quarrel, but, being in,
Bear 't that the opposed may beware of thee.

Give every man thy ear, but few thy voice ;

Take each man's censure,* but reserve thy [opinion
judgment.

Costly thy habit as thy purse can buy,

But not express'd in fancy ; rich, not gaudy ;

For the apparel oft proclaims the man,

And they in France of the best rank and station
Are most select and generous, chief in that.

Neither a borrower nor a lender be ;

For loan oft loses both itself and friend, [economy
And borrowing dulls the edge of husbandry.*

This above all : to thine own self be true,

And it must follow, as the night the day,

Thou canst not then be false to any man.

Farewell ; my blessing season this in thee !

Laer. Most humbly do I take my leave, my
lord.

Pol. The time invites you ; go, your servants
tend.

Laer. Farewell, Ophelia ; and remember well
What I have said to you.

Oph. 'Tis in my memory lock'd,
And you yourself shall keep the key of it.

Laer. Farewell. [Exit.

Pol. What is 't, Ophelia, he hath said to you ?

Hamlet

Oph. So please you, something touching the Lord Hamlet.

Pol. Marry, well bethought :
'Tis told me, he hath very oft of late
Given private time to you, and you yourself
Have of your audience been most free and
bounteous ;

If it be so—as so 'tis put on me,
And that in way of caution—I must tell you,
You do not understand yourself so clearly
As it behoves my daughter and your honour.
What is between you ? give me up the truth.

Oph. He hath, my lord, of late made many
tenders
Of his affection to me.

Pol. Affection ! pooh ! you speak like a green
girl,
Unsifted in such perilous circumstance.
Do you believe his tenders, as you call them ?

Oph. I do not know, my lord, what I should
think.

Pol. Marry, I'll teach you ; think yourself a
baby,
That you have ta'en these tenders for true pay,
Which are not sterling. Tender yourself more
dearly ;

Or—not to crack the wind of the poor phrase,
Running it thus—you'll tender me a fool.

Oph. Mylord, he hath importun'd me with love
In honourable fashion.

Pol. Ay, fashion you may call it ; go to, go to.

Oph. And hath given countenance to his
speech, my lord,
With almost all the holy vows of heaven.

Pol. Ay, springes to catch woodcocks. I do
know,

Act I Scene 4

When the blood burns, how prodigal the soul
Lends the tongue vows ; these blazes, daughter,
Giving more light than heat, extinct in both,
Even in their promise, as it is a-making,
You must not take for fire. From this time
Be somewhat scanter of your maiden presence ;
Set your entreatments at a higher rate
Than a command to parley. For Lord Hamlet,
Believe so much in him, that he is young,
And with a larger tether may he walk
Than may be given you : in few, Ophelia,
Do not believe his vows ; for they are brokers,*

[go-betweenes]

Not of that dye which their investments show,
But mere implorators of unholy suits,
Breathing like sanctified and pious bawds,
The better to beguile. This is for all ;
I would not, in plain terms, from this time forth,
Have you so slander any moment leisure,
As to give words or talk with the Lord Hamlet.
Look to't, I charge you ; come your ways.

Oph. I shall obey, my lord. [Exeunt.]

SCENE 4.—The Platform.

Enter Hamlet, Horatio, and Marcellus.

Ham. The air bites shrewdly ; it is very cold.

Hor. It is a nipping and an eager air.

Ham. What hour now ?

Hor. I think it lacks of twelve.

Ham. No, it is struck.

Hor. Indeed ? I heard it not : it then draws
near the season

Wherein the spirit held his wont to walk.

[A flourish of trumpets and ordnance
shot off within.]

What does this mean, my lord ?

Hamlet

Ham. The king doth wake to-night and takes
his rouse,
Keeps wassail, and the swaggering upspring
reels ;

And as he drains his draughts of Rhenish down,
The kettle-drum and trumpet thus bray out
The triumph of his pledge.

Hor. Is it a custom ?

Ham. Ay, marry is't ;
But to my mind, though I am native here
And to the manner born, it is a custom
More honour'd in the breach than the observ-
ance.

This heavy-headed revel east and west [blamed
Makes us traduc'd and tax'd* of other nations :
They clepe* us drunkards, and with swinish [call
phrase

Soil our addition* ; and indeed it takes [title
From our achievements, though perform'd at
height,

The pith and marrow of our attribute.
So, oft it chances in particular men,
That for some vicious mole of nature in them,
As, in their birth—wherein they are not guilty,
Since nature cannot choose his origin—
By the o'ergrowth of some complexion,*

[natural disposition
Oft breaking down the pales and forts of reason,
Or by some habit that too much o'er-leavens
The form of plausible manners, that these men,
Carrying, I say, the stamp of one defect,
Being nature's livery, or fortune's star,—
Their virtues else—be they as pure as grace,
As infinite as man may undergo*— [experience
Shall in the general censure take corruption
From that particular fault: the dram of eale* [? evil

Act I Scene 4

Doth all the noble substance of a doubt*

To his own scandal.

[? oft do out, efface

Hor.

Look, my lord, it comes!

Enter Ghost.

Ham. Angels and ministers of grace defend us!—

Be thou a spirit of health or goblin damn'd,
Bring with thee airs from heaven or blasts from
hell,

Be thy intents wicked or charitable,
Thou comest in such a questionable shape
That I will speak to thee: I'll call thee Hamlet,
King, father, royal Dane; O, answer me!
Let me not burst in ignorance; but tell
Why thy canoniz'd bones, hearsed in death,
Have burst their cerements; why the sepulchre,
Wherein we saw thee quietly inurn'd,
Hath op'd his ponderous and marble jaws,
To cast thee up again. What may this mean,
That thou, dead corse, again in complete steel
Revisit'st thus the glimpses of the moon,
Making night hideous; and we fools of nature
So horridly to shake our disposition
With thoughts beyond the reaches of our souls?
Say, why is this? wherefore? what should we
do? [Ghost beckons Hamlet.

Hor. It beckons you to go away with it,
As if it some impartment did desire
To you alone.

Mar. Look, with what courteous action
It waves you to a more removed ground:
But do not go with it.

Hor. No, by no means.

Ham. It will not speak; then I will follow it.

Hor. Do not, my lord.

Hamlet

Ham. Why, what should be the fear?
I do not set my life at a pin's fee;
And for my soul, what can it do to that,
Being a thing immortal as itself?
It waves me forth again; I'll follow it.

Hor. What if it tempt you toward the flood,
my lord,
Or to the dreadful summit of the cliff
That beetles o'er his base into the sea,
And there assume some other horrible form,
Which might deprive your sovereignty of reason
And draw you into madness? think of it;
The very place puts toys of desperation,
Without more motive, into every brain
That looks so many fathoms to the sea
And hears it roar beneath.

Ham. It waves me still.
Go on; I'll follow thee.

Mar. You shall not go, my lord.

Ham. Hold off your hands!

Hor. Be rul'd; you shall not go.

Ham. My fate cries out,
And makes each petty artery in this body
As hardy as the Nemean lion's nerve.
Still am I call'd.—Unhand me, gentlemen.
By heaven, I'll make a ghost of him that lets me!
I say, away!—Go on; I'll follow thee.

[*Exeunt Ghost and Hamlet.*]

Hor. He waxes desperate with imagination.

Mar. Let's follow; 'tis not fit thus to obey him.

Hor. Have after.—To what issue will this
come?

Mar. Something is rotten in the state of
Denmark.

Hor. Heaven will direct it.

Mar. Nay, let's follow him. [*Exeunt.*]

Act I Scene 5

SCENE 5.—Another Part of the Platform.

Enter Ghost and Hamlet.

Ham. Where wilt thou lead me? speak; I'll
go no further.

Ghost. Mark me.

Ham. I will.

Ghost. My hour is almost come,
When I to sulphurous and tormenting flames
Must render up myself.

Ham. Alas, poor ghost!

Ghost. Pity me not, but lend thy serious
hearing
To what I shall unfold.

Ham. Speak; I am bound to hear.

Ghost. So art thou to revenge, when thou
shalt hear.

Ham. What?

Ghost. I am thy father's spirit,
Doom'd for a certain term to walk the night,
And for the day confin'd to fast in fires,
Till the foul crimes done in my days of nature
Are burnt and purg'd away. But that I am
forbid

To tell the secrets of my prison-house,
I could a tale unfold whose lightest word
Would harrow up thy soul, freeze thy young
blood,

Make thy two eyes, like stars, start from their
spheres,

Thy knotted and combined locks to part,
And each particular hair to stand an end,
Like quills upon the fretful porpentine;

But this eternal blazon* must [display of eternal things]
not be

To ears of flesh and blood. List, list, O, list!

Hamlet

If thou didst ever thy dear father love—

Ham. O God!

Ghost. Revenge his foul and most unnatural
murther.

Ham. Murther!

Ghost. Murther most foul, as in the best it is;
But this most foul, strange, and unnatural.

Ham. Haste me to know 't, that I, with wings
as swift

As meditation or the thoughts of love,
May sweep to my revenge.

Ghost. I find thee apt;

And duller shouldst thou be than the fat weed
That roots itself in ease on Lethe wharf,* [bank
Wouldst thou not stir in this. Now, Hamlet,
hear:

'Tis given out that, sleeping in my orchard,
A serpent stung me; so the whole ear of Den-
mark

Is by a forged process of my death
Rankly abus'd; but know, thou noble youth,
The serpent that did sting thy father's life
Now wears his crown.

Ham. O my prophetic soul!

My uncle!

Ghost. Ay, that incestuous, that adulterate
beast,

With witchcraft of his wit, with traitorous
gifts,—

O wicked wit and gifts, that have the power
So to seduce!—won to his shameful lust
The will of my most seeming-virtuous queen;
O Hamlet, what a falling-off was there!
From me, whose love was of that dignity
That it went hand in hand even with the vow
I made to her in marriage, and to decline

Act I Scene 5

Upon a wretch whose natural gifts were poor
To those of mine !
But virtue, as it never will be mov'd,
Though lewdness court it in a shape of heaven,
So lust, though to a radiant angel link'd,
Will sate itself in a celestial bed,
And prey on garbage.
But, soft ! methinks I scent the morning air ;
Brief let me be. Sleeping within my orchard,
My custom always in the afternoon,
Upon my secure* hour thy uncle stole, [unguarded
With juice of cursed hebenon* in a [henbane or ebony
vial,
And in the porches of my ears did pour
The leperous distilment ; whose effect
Holds such an enmity with blood of man
That swift as quicksilver it courses through
The natural gates and alleys of the body,
And with a sudden vigour it doth posset
And curd, like eager droppings into milk,
The thin and wholesome blood : so did it mine ;
And a most instant tetter bark'd about,
Most lazar-like, with vile and loathsome crust,
All my smooth body.
Thus was I, sleeping, by a brother's hand
Of life, of crown, of queen, at once dispatch'd ;
Cut off even in the blossoms of my sin,
Unhousel'd,* disappointed, unanel'd,*
[without sacrament, extreme unction
No reckoning made, but sent to my account
With all my imperfections on my head :
O, horrible ! O, horrible ! most horrible !
If thou hast nature in thee, bear it not ;
Let not the royal bed of Denmark be
A couch for luxury and damned incest.
But, howsoever thou pursuest this act,

Hamlet

Taint not thy mind, nor let thy soul contrive
Against thy mother aught ; leave her to heaven
And to those thorns that in her bosom lodge,
To prick and sting her. Fare thee well at once !
The glow-worm shows the matin to be near,
And 'gins to pale his uneffectual fire ;
Adieu, adieu ! Hamlet, remember me. [*Exit.*]

Ham. O all you host of heaven ! O earth !
what else ?

And shall I couple hell ? O, fie ! Hold, hold,
my heart ;

And you, my sinews, grow not instant old,
But bear me stiffly up. Remember thee !

Ay, thou poor ghost, while memory holds a
seat

In this distracted globe.* Remember thee ! [*head*]

Yea, from the table of my memory

I'll wipe away all trivial fond records, [*impressions*]

All saws of books, all forms, all pressures* past,

That youth and observation copied there ;

And thy commandment all alone shall live

Within the book and volume of my brain,

Unmix'd with baser matter : yes, by heaven !

O most pernicious woman !

O villain, villain, smiling, damned villain !

My tables,*—meet it is I set it down, [*tablets*]

That one may smile, and smile, and be a villain ;

At least I'm sure it may be so in Denmark.

[*Writing.*]

So, uncle, there you are.—Now to my word ;

It is 'Adieu, adieu ! remember me.'

I have sworn 't.

Mar. } [*Within*] My lord, my lord !
Hor. }

Mar. } [*Within*] Lord Hamlet !

Hor. } [*Within*] Heaven secure him !

Act I Scene 5

Ham. So be it !

Hor. [*Within*] Hillo, ho, ho, my lord !

Ham. Hillo, ho, ho, boy ! come, bird, come.

Enter Horatio and Marcellus.

Mar. How is 't, my noble lord ?

Hor. What news, my lord ?

Ham. O, wonderful !

Hor. Good my lord, tell it.

Ham. No ; you will reveal it.

Hor. Not I, my lord, by heaven.

Mar. Nor I, my lord.

Ham. How say you, then ; would heart of
man once think it ?

But you 'll be secret ?

Hor. } Ay, by heaven, my lord.

Mar. }
Ham. There's ne'er a villain dwelling in all
Denmark

But he's an arrant knave.

Hor. There needs no ghost, my lord, come
from the grave

To tell us this.

Ham. Why, right : you are i' the right ;
And so, without more circumstance at all,
I hold it fit that we shake hands and part :
You, as your business and desire shall point
you,—

For every man has business and desire,
Such as it is ;—and for mine own poor part,
Look you, I'll go pray.

Hor. These are but wild and whirling words,
my lord.

Ham. I'm sorry they offend you, heartily ;
Yes, 'faith, heartily.

Hor. There's no offence, my lord.

Hamlet

Ham. Yes, by Saint Patrick, but there is,
Horatio,
And much offence too. Touching this vision
here,

It is an honest ghost, that let me tell you ;
For your desire to know what is between us,
O'ermaster't as you may. And now, good
friends,

As you are friends, scholars, and soldiers,
Give me one poor request.

Hor. What is't, my lord? we will.

Ham. Never make known what you have
seen to-night.

Hor. } My lord, we will not.
Mar. }

Ham. Nay, but swear't.

Hor. In faith,

My lord, not I.

Mar. Nor I, my lord, in faith.

Ham. Upon my sword.

Mar. We have sworn, my lord, already.

Ham. Indeed, upon my sword, indeed.

Ghost. [*Beneath*] Swear.

Ham. Ah, ha, boy! say'st thou so? art thou
there, true-penny*?—

[*trusty fellow*]

Come on—you hear this fellow in the cellarage—
Consent to swear.

Hor. Propose the oath, my lord.

Ham. Never to speak of this that you have seen.
Swear by my sword.

Ghost. [*Beneath*] Swear.

Ham. *Hic et ubique?* then we'll shift our
ground.—

Come hither, gentlemen,
And lay your hands again upon my sword,
Never to speak of this that you have heard.

Act I Scene 5

Swear by my sword.

Ghost. [*Beneath*] Swear.

Ham. Well said, old mole! canst work i' the earth so fast?

A worthy pioner!—Once more remove, good friends.

Hor. O day and night, but this is wondrous strange!

Ham. And therefore as a stranger give it welcome.

There are more things in heaven and earth,
Horatio,

Than are dreamt of in your philosophy.

But come;

Here, as before, never, so help you mercy,

How strange or odd soe'er I bear myself,—

As I perchance hereafter shall think meet

To put an antic* disposition on,— [fantastic

That you, at such times seeing me, never shall,

With arms encumber'd thus, or this head-shake,

Or by pronouncing of some doubtful phrase,

As 'Well, well, we know,' or 'We could, an if we would,'

Or 'If we list to speak,' or 'There be, an if they might,'

Or such ambiguous giving-out, to note

That you know aught of me: this not to do,

So grace and mercy at your most need help you,
Swear.

Ghost. [*Beneath*] Swear.

Ham. Rest, rest, perturbed spirit! [*They swear*] So, gentlemen,

With all my love I do commend me to you;

And what so poor a man as Hamlet is

May do, to express his love and friending to you,

Hamlet

God willing, shall not lack. Let us go in together;

And still your fingers on your lips, I pray.

The time is out of joint;—O cursed spite,

That ever I was born to set it right!—

Nay, come, let's go together. [*Exeunt.*]

ACT II.

SCENE 1.—A Room in Polonius's House.

Enter Polonius and Reynaldo.

Pol. Give him this money and these notes
Reynaldo.

Rey. I will, my lord.

Pol. You shall do marvellous wisely, good
Reynaldo,

Before you visit him, to make inquire
Of his behaviour.

Rey. My lord, I did intend it.

Pol. Marry, well said, very well said. Look
you, sir,

Inquire me first what Danskers* are in Paris, [*Danes*]
And how, and who; what means, and where
they keep;

What company, at what expense; and finding
By this encompassment* and drift of [*range*]
question

That they do know my son, come you more
nearer

Than your particular demands will touch it:

Take you, as 'twere, some distant knowledge of
him,

As thus, 'I know his father and his friends,
And in part him,'—do you mark this, Reynaldo?

Rey. Ay, very well, my lord.

Act II Scene 1

Pol. 'And in part him ; but ' you may say ' not well ;

But, if 't be he I mean, he 's very wild,
Addicted ' so and so : and there put on him
What forgeries you please ; marry, none so rank
As may dishonour him ; take heed of that ;
But, sir, such wanton, wild, and usual slips
As are companions noted and most known
To youth and liberty.

Rey. As gaming, my lord.

Pol. Ay, or drinking, fencing, swearing,
quarrelling,

Drabbing ; you may go so far.

Rey. My lord, that would dishonour him.

Pol. Faith, no ; as you may season it in the
charge.

You must not put another scandal on him,
That he is open to incontinency ;
That 's not my meaning : but breathe his faults
so quaintly

That they may seem the taints of liberty,
The flash and outbreak of a fiery mind,
A savageness in unreclaimed blood,
Of general assault.

Rey. But, my good lord,—

Pol. Wherefore should you do this ?

Rey. Ay, my lord,

I would know that.

Pol. Marry, sir, here 's my drift ;
And, I believe, it is a fetch of warrant.*

[approved device

You laying these slight sullies on my son,
As 'twere a thing a little soil'd i' the working,
Mark you,

Your party in converse, him you would sound
Having ever seen in the prenominate crimes

Hamlet

The youth you breathe of guilty, be assur'd
He closes with you in this consequence :
' Good sir,' or so, or ' friend,' or ' gentleman,'
According to the phrase or the addition
Of man and country.

Rey. Very good, my lord.

Pol. And then, sir, does he this—he does—
what was I about to say? By the mass, I was
about to say something; where did I leave?

Rey. At ' closes in the consequence,' at ' friend
or so,' and ' gentleman.'

Pol. At ' closes in the consequence,' ay, marry;
He closes thus: ' I know the gentleman;
I saw him yesterday, or t' other day,
Or then, or then, with such, or such, and, as
you say,

There was he gaming, there o'ertook in's rouse,
There falling out at tennis;' or perchance,
' I saw him enter such a house of sale,'
Videlicet, a brothel, or so forth.

See you now;

Your bait of falsehood takes this carp of truth;
And thus do we of wisdom and of reach,*^[shrewdness]
With windlasses and with assays of bias,*

^[winding ways and indirect attempts]

By indirections find directions out:

So, by my former lecture and advice,

Shall you my son. You have me, have you not?

Rey. My lord, I have.

Pol. God be wi' you; fare you well.

Rey. Good my lord!

Pol. Observe his inclination in yourself.

Rey. I shall, my lord.

Pol. And let him ply his music.

Rey.

Well, my lord.

Pol. Farewell!

[*Exit Reynaldo.*]

Act II Scene 1

Enter Ophelia.

How now, Ophelia! what's the matter?

Oph. O, my lord, my lord, I have been so affrighted!

Pol. With what, i' the name of God?

Oph. My lord, as I was sewing in my closet,
Lord Hamlet, with his doublet all unbrac'd;
No hat upon his head; his stockings foul'd,
Ungarter'd, and down-gyved* to [hanging like fetters
his ankle;

Pale as his shirt; his knees knocking each other;
And with a look so piteous in purport
As if he had been loosed out of hell
To speak of horrors,—he comes before me.

Pol. Mad for thy love?

Oph. My lord, I do not know;
But truly, I do fear it.

Pol. What said he?

Oph. He took me by the wrist and held me
hard;

Then goes he to the length of all his arm,
And, with his other hand thus o'er his brow,
He falls to such perusal of my face
As he would draw it. Long stay'd he so;
At last, a little shaking of mine arm,
And thrice his head thus waving up and down,
He rais'd a sigh so piteous and profound
As it did seem to shatter all his bulk
And end his being: that done, he lets me go;
And, with his head over his shoulder turn'd,
He seem'd to find his way without his eyes;
For out o' doors he went without their help,
And, to the last, bended their light on me.

Pol. Come, go with me; I will go seek the king.
This is the very ecstasy of love,
Whose violent property fordoes* itself [undoes

Hamlet

And leads the will to desperate undertakings,
As oft as any passion under heaven
That does afflict our natures. I am sorry,—
What, have you given him any hard words of
late?

Oph. No, my good lord, but, as you did command,
I did repel his letters, and denied
His access to me.

Pol. That hath made him mad.
I am sorry that with better heed and judgment
I had not quoted* him. I fear'd he did but [noted
trifle,
And meant to wrack thee; but beshrew my
jealousy!
By heaven, it is as proper to our age
To cast beyond ourselves in our opinions
As it is common for the younger sort
To lack discretion. Come, go we to the king:
This must be known; which, being kept close,
might move
More grief to hide than hate to utter love.

[*Exeunt.*

SCENE 2.—A Room in the Castle.

*Enter King, Queen, Rosencrantz, Guildenstern,
and Attendants.*

King. Welcome, dear Rosencrantz and Guildenstern!
Moreover that we much did long to see you,
The need we have to use you did provoke
Our hasty sending. Something have you heard
Of Hamlet's transformation; so I call it,
Since not the exterior nor the inward man
Resembles that it was. What it should be,

Act II Scene 2

More than his father's death, that thus hath
put him

So much from the understanding of himself,
I cannot dream of. I entreat you both,
That, being of so young days brought up with
him,

And since so neighbour'd to his youth and humour,
That you vouchsafe your rest here in our court
Some little time ; so by your companies
To draw him on to pleasures, and to gather,
So much as from occasion you may glean,
Whether aught to us unknown afflicts him thus,
That, open'd, lies within our remedy.

Queen. Good gentlemen, he hath much talk'd
of you,

And sure I am two men there are not living
To whom he more adheres. If it will please you
To show us so much gentry and good will
As to expend your time with us awhile,
For the supply and profit of our hope,
Your visitation shall receive such thanks
As fits a king's remembrance.

Ros. Both your majesties
Might, by the sovereign power you have of us,
Put your dread pleasures more into command
Than to entreaty.

Guil. But we both obey,
And here give up ourselves, in the full bent
To lay our service freely at your feet,
To be commanded.

King. Thanks, Rosencrantz and gentle Guild-
enstern.

Queen. Thanks, Guildenstern and gentle Ros-
encrantz ;

And I beseech you instantly to visit
My too much changed son.—Go, some of you,

Hamlet

And bring these gentlemen where Hamlet is
Guil. Heavens make our presence and our
practices
Pleasant and helpful to him!

Queen.

Ay, amen!

[*Exeunt Rosencrantz, Guildenstern, and
some Attendants*

Enter Polonius.

Pol. The ambassadors from Norway, my
good lord,
Are joyfully return'd.

King. Thou still* hast been the father of ^{ever}
good news.

Pol. Have I, my lord? Assure you, my good
liege,

I hold my duty, as I hold my soul,
Both to my God and to my gracious king;
And I do think, or else this brain of mine
Hunts not the trail of policy so sure
As it hath us'd to do, that I have found
The very cause of Hamlet's lunacy.

King. O, speak of that; that do I long to hear.

Pol. Give first admittance to the ambassadors;
My news shall be the fruit to that great feast.

King. Thyself do grace to them, and bring
them in. [*Exit Polonius.*

He tells me, my sweet queen, that he hath found
The head and source of all your son's distemper.

Queen. I doubt it is no other but the main,—
His father's death, and our o'erhasty marriage.

King. Well, we shall sift him.

*Re-enter Polonius, with Voltinand and
Cornelius.*

Welcome, my good friends!
Say, Voltinand, what from our brother Norway?

Act II Scene 2

Volt. Most fair return of greetings and desires.
Upon our first, he sent out to suppress
His nephew's levies, which to him appear'd
To be a preparation 'gainst the Polack,
But, better look'd into, he truly found
It was against your highness : whereat griev'd,
That so his sickness, age, and impotence [deluded
Was falsely borne in hand,* sends out arrests
On Fortinbras ; which he, in brief, obeys,
Receives rebuke from Norway, and in fine
Makes vow before his uncle never more
To give the assay of arms against your majesty.
Whereon old Norway, overcome with joy,
Gives him three thousand crowns in annual fee,
And his commission to employ those soldiers,
So levied as before, against the Polack ;
With an entreaty, herein further shown, .

[*Giving a paper.*

That it might please you to give quiet pass
Through your dominions for this enterprise,
On such regards of safety and allowance
As therein are set down.

King. It likes us well ;
And at our more consider'd time we'll read,
Answer, and think upon this business.
Meantime we thank you for your well-took
labour.

Go to your rest ; at night we'll feast together :
Most welcome home !

[*Exeunt Voltimand and Cornelius.*

Pol. This business is well ended.—
My liege, and madam, to expostulate
What majesty should be, what duty is,
Why day is day, night night, and time is time,
Were nothing but to waste night, day, and time.
Therefore, since brevity is the soul of wit,

Hamlet

And tediousness the limbs and outward flourishes,
I will be brief. Your noble son is mad :
Mad call I it ; for, to define true madness,
What is 't but to be nothing else but mad ?
But let that go.

Queen. More matter, with less art.

Pol. Madam, I swear I use no art at all.
That he is mad, 'tis true ; 'tis true 'tis pity,
And pity 'tis 'tis true : a foolish figure ;
But farewell it, for I will use no art.
Mad let us grant him, then ; and now remains
That we find out the cause of this effect,
Or rather say, the cause of this defect,
For this effect defective comes by cause :
Thus it remains, and the remainder thus.
Perpend.*

[consider

I have a daughter—have while she is mine—
Who, in her duty and obedience, mark,
Hath given me this ; now gather, and surmise.
[Reads] '*To the celestial and my soul's idol, the
most beautified Ophelia,—*
That's an ill phrase, a vile phrase ; 'beautified'
is a vile phrase : but you shall hear. Thus :
[Reads] '*In her excellent white bosom, these, etc.*'

Queen. Came this from Hamlet to her ?

Pol. Good madam, stay awhile ; I will be
faithful.

[Reads] '*Doubt thou the stars are fire ;
Doubt that the sun doth move ;
Doubt truth to be a liar ;
But never doubt I love.*

'*O dear Ophelia, I am ill at these numbers.
I have not art to reckon my groans ; but that I
love thee best, O most best, believe it. Adieu.*

'*Thine evermore, most dear lady, whilst
this machine is to him, HAMLET.*'

Act II Scene 2

This in obedience hath my daughter shown me,
And more above, hath his solicitings,
As they fell out by time, by means, and place,
All given to mine ear.

King. But how hath she
Receiv'd his love?

Pol. What do you think of me?

King. As of a man faithful and honourable.

Pol. I would fain prove so. But what might
you think,

When I had seen this hot love on the wing—
As I perceiv'd it, I must tell you that,
Before my daughter told me—what might you,
Or my dear majesty your queen here, think,
If I had play'd the desk or table-book,*

[played the part of secretary
for had connived at it]
Or given my heart a winking,*
mute and dumb,

Or look'd upon this love with idle sight;
What might you think? No, I went round to work,
And my young mistress thus I did bespeak:
'Lord Hamlet is a prince, out of thy star*;

[out of thy sphere]
This must not be:' and then I precepts gave her,
That she should lock herself from his resort,
Admit no messengers, receive no tokens.

Which done, she took the fruits of my advice;
And he, repulsed—a short tale to make—
Fell into a sadness, then into a fast,

Thence to a watch,* thence into a weak-[sleeplessness]
ness,

Thence to a lightness,* and by this [lightheadedness]
declension

Into the madness wherein now he raves,
And all we mourn for.

King. Do you think 'tis this?

Queen. It may be, very likely.

Hamlet

Pol. Hath there been such a time—I'd fain know that—
That I have positively said 'Tis so,
When it prov'd otherwise?

King. Not that I know.

Pol. [*Pointing to his head and shoulder*] Take this from this, if this be otherwise.
If circumstances lead me, I will find
Where truth is hid, though it were hid indeed
Within the centre.

King. How may we try it further?

Pol. You know, sometimes he walks four hours together
Here in the lobby.

Queen. So he does indeed.

Pol. At such a time I'll loose my daughter to him:
Be you and I behind an arras* then; [*tapestry*]
Mark the encounter: if he love her not,
And be not from his reason fallen thereon,
Let me be no assistant for a state,
But keep a farm and carters.

King. We will try it.

Queen. But, look, where sadly the poor wretch comes reading.

Pol. Away, I do beseech you, both away;
I'll board him presently.

[*Exeunt King, Queen, and Attendants.*]

Enter Hamlet, reading.

O, give me leave;
How does my good Lord Hamlet?

Ham. Well, God-a-mercy.

Pol. Do you know me, my lord?

Ham. Excellent well; you are a fishmonger.

Pol. Not I, my lord.

Ham. Then I would you were so honest a man.

Pol. Honest, my lord!

Act II Scene 2

Ham. Ay, sir; to be honest, as this world goes, is to be one man picked out of ten thousand.

Pol. That's very true, my lord.

Ham. For if the sun breed maggots in a dead dog, being a god kissing carrion,—Have you a daughter?

Pol. I have, my lord.

Ham. Let her not walk i' the sun: conception is a blessing; but not as your daughter may conceive. Friend, look to 't.

Pol. [*Aside*] How say you by that? Still harping on my daughter; yet he knew me not at first; he said I was a fishmonger; he is far gone, far gone; and truly in my youth I suffered much extremity for love; very near this. I'll speak to him again.—What do you read, my lord?

Ham. Words, words, words.

Pol. What is the matter, my lord?

Ham. Between who?

Pol. I mean, the matter that you read, my lord.

Ham. Slanders, sir; for the satirical rogue says here that old men have grey beards, that their faces are wrinkled, their eyes purging* thick amber and plum-tree gum, and [*discharging* that they have a plentiful lack of wit, together with most weak hams: all which, sir, though I most powerfully and potently believe, yet I hold it not honesty to have it thus set down; for yourself, sir, should be old as I am, if like a crab you could go backward.

Pol. [*Aside*] Though this be madness, yet there is method in 't.—Will you walk out of the air, my lord?

Ham. Into my grave?

Pol. Indeed, that is out o' the air. [*Aside*] How pregnant* sometimes his replies are! [*ready*

Hamlet

a happiness that often madness hits on, which reason and sanity could not so prosperously be delivered of. I will leave him, and suddenly contrive the means of meeting between him and my daughter.—My honourable lord, I will most humbly take my leave of you.

Ham. You cannot, sir, take from me any thing that I will more willingly part withal; except my life, except my life, except my life.

Pol. Fare you well, my lord.

Ham. These tedious old fools!

Enter Rosencrantz and Guildenstern.

Pol. You go to seek the Lord Hamlet; there he is.

Ros. [*To Polonius*] God save you, sir!

[*Exit Polonius.*]

Guil. My honoured lord:

Ros. My most dear lord!

Ham. My excellent good friends! How dost thou, Guildenstern?—Ah, Rosencrantz! Good lads, how do ye both?

Ros. As the indifferent children of the earth.

Guil. Happy, in that we are not over-happy; On Fortune's cap we are not the very button.

Ham. Nor the soles of her shoe?

Ros. Neither, my lord.

Ham. Then you live about her waist, or in the middle of her favours?

Guil. Faith, her privates we.

Ham. In the secret parts of fortune? O, most true; she is a strumpet. What's the news?

Ros. None, my lord, but that the world's grown honest.

Ham. Then is doomsday near; but your news is not true. Let me question more in particular;

Act II Scene 2

what have you, my good friends, deserved at the hands of Fortune, that she sends you to prison hither?

Guil. Prison, my lord!

Ham. Denmark's a prison.

Ros. Then is the world one.

Ham. A goodly one; in which there are many confines, wards, and dungeons, Denmark being one o' the worst.

Ros. We think not so, my lord.

Ham. Why, then 'tis none to you; for there is nothing either good or bad, but thinking makes it so: to me it is a prison.

Ros. Why, then your ambition makes it one; 'tis too narrow for your mind.

Ham. O God, I could be bounded in a nutshell, and count myself a king of infinite space, were it not that I have bad dreams.

Guil. Which dreams indeed are ambition, for the very substance of the ambitious is merely the shadow of a dream.

Ham. A dream itself is but a shadow.

Ros. Truly, and I hold ambition of so airy and light a quality that it is but a shadow's shadow.

Ham. Then are our beggars bodies, and our monarchs and outstretched heroes the beggars' shadows. Shall we to the court? for, by my fay, I cannot reason.

Ros. } We'll wait upon you.
Guil. }

Ham. No such matter: I will not sort you with the rest of my servants; for, to speak to you like an honest man, I am most dreadfully attended. But, in the beaten way of friendship, what make you at Elsinore?

Ros. To visit you, my lord; no other occasion,

Hamlet

Ham. Beggar that I am, I am even poor in thanks; but I thank you: and sure, dear friends, my thanks are too dear a halfpenny. Were you not sent for? Is it your own inclining? Is it a free visitation? Come, deal justly with me: come, come; nay, speak.

Guil. What should we say, my lord?

Ham. Why, any thing, but to the purpose. You were sent for; and there is a kind of confession in your looks which your modesties have not craft enough to colour. I know the good king and queen have sent for you.

Ros. To what end, my lord?

Ham. That you must teach me. But let me conjure you, by the rights of our fellowship, by the consonancy of our youth, by the obligation of our ever-preserved love, and by what more dear a better proposer could charge you withal, be even and direct with me, whether you were sent for, or no?

Ros. [*Aside to Guildenstern*] What say you?

Ham. [*Aside*] Nay, then, I have an eye of you.—If you love me, hold not off.

Guil. My lord, we were sent for.

Ham. I will tell you why; so shall my anticipation prevent your discovery,* [*forestall your disclosure* and your secrecy to the king and queen moult no feather. I have of late—but wherefore I know not—lost all my mirth, forgone all custom of exercises; and indeed it goes so heavily with my disposition that this goodly frame, the earth, seems to me a sterile promontory; this most excellent canopy, the air, look you, this brave o'erhanging firmament, this majestical roof fretted with golden fire,—why, it appears no other thing to me than a foul and pestilent con-

Act II Scene 2

gregation of vapours. What a piece of work is man! how noble in reason! how infinite in faculty; in form and moving how express and admirable! in action how like an angel! in apprehension how like a god! the beauty of the world! the paragon of animals! And yet, to me, what is this quintessence of dust? man delights not me; no, nor woman neither, though by your smiling you seem to say so.

Ros. My lord, there was no such stuff in my thoughts.

Ham. Why did you laugh then, when I said 'man delights not me?'

Ros. To think, my lord, if you delight not in man, what lenten* entertainment the [meagre players shall receive from you; we coted* [passed them on the way, and hither are they coming to offer you service.

Ham. He that plays the king shall be welcome; his majesty shall have tribute of me; the adventurous knight shall use his foil and target; the lover shall not sigh gratis; the humorous man shall end his part in peace; the clown shall make those laugh whose lungs are tickle o' the sere*; and the lady shall say [ticklish as a hair-trigger her mind freely, or the blank verse shall halt for't. What players are they?

Ros. Even those you were wont to take delight in, the tragedians of the city.

Ham. How chances it they travel? their residence, both in reputation and profit, was better both ways.

Ros. I think their inhibition comes by the means of the late innovation.

Ham. Do they hold the same estimation they did when I was in the city? are they so followed?

Hamlet

Ros. No, indeed, are they not.

Ham. How comes it? do they grow rusty?

Ros. Nay, their endeavour keeps in the wonted pace; but there is, sir, an aery of children, little eyases,* that cry out on the top of [unfledged hawks question, and are most tyrannically clapped* for't: these are now the fashion, and so [applauded berattle the common stages—so they call them—that many wearing rapiers are afraid of goose-quills,* and dare scarce come thither. [lampoons

Ham. What, are they children? who maintains 'em? how are they escoted*? Will they [paid pursue the quality* no longer than they [profession can sing? will they not say afterwards, if they should grow themselves to common players—as it is most like, if their means are no better—their writers do them wrong, to make them exclaim against their own succession*? [future

Ros. Faith, there has been much to-do on both sides, and the nation holds it no sin to tarre* them to controversy; there was for a [set them on while no money bid for argument, unless the poet and the player went to cuffs in the question.

Ham. Is't possible?

Guil. O, there has been much throwing about of brains.

Ham. Do the boys carry it away*? [carry off the palm

Ros. Ay, that they do, my lord; Hercules and his load too.

Ham. It is not very strange; for mine uncle is king of Denmark, and those that would make mows* at him while my father lived give [mouths twenty, forty, fifty, an hundred ducats apiece for his picture in little. 'Sblood, there is something in this more than natural, if philosophy could find it out. [Flourish of trumpets within.

Act II Scene 2

Guil. There are the players.

Ham. Gentlemen, you are welcome to Elsinore. Your hands, come; the appurtenance of welcome is fashion and ceremony: let me comply with you in this garb, lest my extent to the players, which, I tell you, must show fairly outward, should more appear like entertainment than yours. You are welcome; but my uncle-father and aunt-mother are deceived.

Guil. In what, my dear lord?

Ham. I am but mad north-north-west; when the wind is southerly I know a hawk from a handsaw.*

[*Thershaw, a heron*

Enter Polonius.

Pol. Well be with you, gentlemen!

Ham. Hark you, Guildenstern;—and you too;—at each ear a hearer: that great baby you see there is not yet out of his swaddling-clouts.

Ros. Happily he's the second time come to them; for they say an old man is twice a child.

Ham. I will prophesy he comes to tell me of the players; mark it.—You say right, sir: o' Monday morning; 'twas so indeed.

Pol. My lord, I have news to tell you.

Ham. My lord, I have news to tell you. When Roscius was an actor in Rome,—

Pol. The actors are come hither, my lord.

Ham. Buz, buz!

Pol. Upon mine honour,—

Ham. Then came each actor on his ass,—

Pol. The best actors in the world, either for tragedy, comedy, history, pastoral, pastoral-conical, historical-pastoral, tragical-historical, tragical-comical-historical-pastoral, scene indivisible, or poem unlimited; Seneca cannot be

Hamlet

too heavy, nor Plautus too light. For the law of writ and the liberty, these are the only men.

Ham. O Jephthah, judge of Israel, what a treasure hadst thou!

Pol. What treasure had he, my lord?

Ham. Why,

‘One fair daughter, and no more,
The which he loved passing well.’

Pol. [*Aside*] Still on my daughter.

Ham. Am I not i’ the right, old Jephthah?

Pol. If you call me Jephthah, my lord, I have a daughter that I love passing well.

Ham. Nay, that follows not.

Pol. What follows, then, my lord?

Ham. Why,

‘As by lot, God wot,’

and then, you know,

‘It came to pass, as most like it was,’—
the first row of the pious chanson will show you more; for look, where my abridgment* [*pastime* comes.

Enter four or five Players.

You are welcome, masters; welcome, all. I am glad to see ye well. Welcome, good friends.—O, my old friend! thy face is valanced* [*bearded* since I saw thee last; comest thou to beard me in Denmark?—What, my young lady and mistress! By’r lady, your ladyship is nearer to heaven than when I saw you last, by the altitude of a chopine.* Pray God, [*a thick soled clog* your voice, like a piece of uncurrent gold, be not cracked within the ring.—Masters, you are all welcome. We’ll e’en to’t like French falconers, fly at any thing we see; we’ll have a speech straight. Come, give us a taste of your quality; come, a passionate speech.

Act II Scene 2

1st Play. What speech, my lord?

Ham. I heard thee speak me a speech once, but it was never acted; or, if it was, not above once, for the play, I remember, pleased not the million; 'twas caviare to the general; but it was—as I received it, and others, whose judgments in such matters cried in the top of mine—an excellent play, well digested in the scenes, set down with as much modesty as cunning. I remember, one said there were no sallets* in the lines to make the matter savoury, [nothing piquant nor no matter in the phrase that might indict the author of affectation; but called it an honest method, as wholesome as sweet, and by very much more handsome than fine. One speech in it I chiefly loved: 'twas Æneas' tale to Dido: and thereabout of it especially, where he speaks of Priam's slaughter. If it live in your memory, begin at this line; let me see, let me see—

The rugged Pyrrhus, like the Hyrcanian beast,*—[the tiger 'tis not so:—it begins with 'Pyrrhus.'

The rugged Pyrrhus, he whose sable arms,
Black as his purpose, did the night resemble
When he lay couched in the ominous horse,
Hath now this dread and black complexion smear'd
With heraldry more dismal: head to foot
Now is he total gules*; horridly trick'd [red
With blood of fathers, mothers, daughters, sons,
Bak'd and impasted with the parching streets,
That lend a tyrannous and damned light
To their lord's murder. Roasted in wrath and fire,
And thus o'er-sized with coagulate gore,
With eyes like carbuncles, the hellish Pyrrhus
Old grandsire Priam seeks.

So, proceed you.

Pol. Fore God, my lord, well spoken, with good accent and good discretion.

1st Play.

Anon he finds him
Striking too short at Greeks; his antique sword,

Hamlet

Rebellious to his arm, lies where it falls,
Repugnant to command : unequal match'd,
Pyrrhus at Priam drives ; in rage strikes wide ;
But with the whiff and wind of his fell sword
The unnerv'd father falls. Then senseless Ilium,
Seeming to feel this blow, with flaming top
Stoops to his base, and with a hideous crash
Takes prisoner Pyrrhus' ear ; for, lo ! his sword,
Which was declining on the milky head
Of reverend Priam, seem'd i' the air to stick :
So, as a painted tyrant, Pyrrhus stood,
And, like a neutral to his will and matter,
Did nothing.

But, as we often see, against some storm,
A silence in the heavens, the rack stand still,
The bold winds speechless, and the orb below
As hush as death, anon the dreadful thunder
Doth rend the region ; so, after Pyrrhus' pause,
Aroused vengeance sets him new a-work,
And never did the Cyclops' hammers fall
On Mars's armour forg'd for proof eterne
With less remorse than Pyrrhus' bleeding sword
Now falls on Priam.

Out, out, thou strumpet, Fortune ! All you gods,
In general synod, take away her power ;
Break all the spokes and fellics* from her wheel, [rim
And bowl the round nave down the hill of heaven
As low as to the fiends !

Pol. This is too long.

Ham. It shall to the barber's, with your
beard.—Prithee, say on :—he's for a jig or a
tale of bawdry, or he sleeps.—Say on ; come to
Hecuba.

1st Play. But who, O, who had seen the mobled* [muffled
queen—

Ham. 'The mobled queen ?

Pol. That's good ; 'mobled queen' is good.

1st Play. Run barefoot up and down, threatening the
flames

With bisson rhenm* ; a clout about that head [blinding tears
Where late the diadem stood ; and for a robe,
About her lank and all o'er-teemed loins,

Act II Scene 2

A blanket, in the alarm of fear caught up ;
Who this had seen, with tongue in venom steep'd,
'Gainst Fortune's state would treason have pronounc'd :
But if the gods themselves did see her then,
When she saw Pyrrhus make malicious sport
In mincing with his sword her husband's limbs,
The instant burst of clamour that she made—
Unless things mortal move them not at all—
Would have made milch*the burning eyes of heaven [moist
And passion in the gods.

Pol. Look, whether he has not turned his colour
and has tears in 's eyes.—Pray you, no more.

Ham. 'Tis well, I'll have thee speak out the
rest soon.—Good my lord, will you see the
players well bestowed? Do you hear, let them
be well used, for they are the abstract and brief
chronicles of the time; after your death you
were better have a bad epitaph than their ill
report while you live.

Pol. My lord, I will use them according to
their desert.

Ham. God's bodykins, man, much better!
Use every man after his desert, and who should
scape whipping? Use them after your own
honour and dignity; the less they deserve, the
more merit is in your bounty. Take them in.

Pol. Come, sirs.

Ham. Follow him, friends; we'll hear a play
to-morrow. [*Exit Polonius with all the
Players but the First.*] Dost thou hear me, old
friend; can you play the Murther of Gonzago?

1st Play. Ay, my lord.

Ham. We'll ha't to-morrow night. You
could, for a need, study a speech of some dozen
or sixteen lines, which I would set down and
insert in't, could you not?

1st Play. Ay, my lord.

Ham. Very well. Follow that lord; and

Hamlet

look you mock him not. [*Exit Player.*] My good friends, I'll leave you till night; you are welcome to Elsinore.

Ros. Good my lord!

Ham. Ay, so, God be wi' ye! [*Exeunt Rosen-
crantz and Guildenstern.*] Now I am alone.

O, what a rogue and peasant slave am I!
Is it not monstrous that this player here,
But in a fiction, in a dream of passion,
Could force his soul so to his own conceit
That from her working all his visage wann'd,
Tears in his eyes, distraction in 's aspect,
A broken voice, and his whole function suiting
With forms to his conceit? and all for nothing!
For Hecuba!

What's Hecuba to him, or he to Hecuba,
That he should weep for her? What would he do,
Had he the motive and the cue for passion
That I have? He would drown the stage with
tears

And cleave the general ear with horrid speech,
Make mad the guilty and appal the free,
Confound the ignorant, and amaze indeed
The very faculties of eyes and ears.

Yet I,
A dull and muddy-mettled rascal, peak,* [*mope*
Like John-a-dreams, unpregnant of my cause,
And can say nothing; no, not for a king,
Upon whose property* and most dear life [*state*
A damn'd defeat was made. Am I a coward?
Who calls me villain? breaks my pate across?
Plucks off my beard, and blows it in my face?
Tweaks me by the nose? gives me the lie i' the
throat,

As deep as to the lungs? who does me this?
Ha!

Act II Scene 2

'Swounds, I should take it ; for it cannot be
But I am pigeon-liver'd and lack gall
To make oppression bitter, or ere this
I should have fatted all the region kites
With this slave's offal. Bloody, bawdy villain !
Remorseless, treacherous, lecherous, kindless
villain !

O vengeance !

Why, what an ass am I ! This is most brave,
That I, the son of a dear father murther'd,
Prompted to my revenge by heaven and hell,
Must, like a whore, unpack my heart with words,
And fall a-cursing, like a very drab,
A scullion !

Fie upon't ! foh ! About, my brain ! I have
heard

That guilty creatures sitting at a play
Have by the very cunning of the scene
Been struck so to the soul that presently
They have proclaim'd their malefactions ;
For murther, though it have no tongue, will
speak

With most miraculous organ. I'll have these
players

Play something like the murther of my father
Before mine uncle : I'll observe his looks ;
I'll tent him to the quick : if he but blench,
I know my course. The spirit that I have seen
May be the devil ; and the devil hath power
To assume a pleasing shape ; yea, and perhaps
Out of my weakness and my melancholy,
As he is very potent with such spirits,
Abuses me to damn me. I'll have grounds
More relative than this ; the play's the thing
Wherein I'll catch the conscience of the king.

[*Exit.*

Hamlet

ACT III.

SCENE 1.—A Room in the Castle.

*Enter King, Queen, Polonius, Ophelia,
Rosencrantz, and Guildenstern.*

King. And can you, by no drift of circumstance,

Get from him why he puts on this confusion,
Grating so harshly all his days of quiet
With turbulent and dangerous lunacy?

Ros. He does confess he feels himself distracted;

But from what cause he will by no means speak.

Guil. Nordowe find him forward to besounded,
But, with a crafty madness, keeps aloof,
When we would bring him on to some confession
Of his true state.

Queen. Did he receive you well?

Ros. Most like a gentleman.

Guil. But with much forcing of his disposition.

Ros. Niggard of question, but of our demands
Most free in his reply.

Queen. Did you assay him
To any pastime?

Ros. Madam, it so fell out that certain players
We o'er-raught on the way; of these we told him,
And there did seem in him a kind of joy
To hear of it. They are about the court,
And, as I think, they have already order
This night to play before him.

Pol. 'Tis most true;
And he beseech'd me to entreat your majesties
To hear and see the matter.

King. With all my heart; and it doth much
content me

Act III Scene 1

To hear him so inclin'd.—

[Incitement]

Good gentlemen, give him a further edge,*
And drive his purpose on to these delights.

Ros. We shall, my lord.

[*Exeunt Rosencrantz and Guildenstern.*]

King. Sweet Gertrude, leave us too;

For we have closely sent for Hamlet hither,

That he, as 'twere by accident, may here

Affront* Ophelia.

[confront]

Her father and myself, lawful espials,

Will so bestow ourselves that, seeing unseen,

We may of their encounter frankly judge,

And gather by him, as he is behav'd,

If't be the affliction of his love or no

That thus he suffers for.

Queen. I shall obey you.—

And for your part, Ophelia, I do wish

That your good beauties be the happy cause

Of Hamlet's wildness; so shall I hope your virtues

Will bring him to his wonted way again,

To both your honours.

Oph. Madam, I wish it may.

[*Exit Queen.*]

Pol. Ophelia, walk you here.—Gracious, so
please you,

We will bestow ourselves. [*To Ophelia*] Read
on this book;

That show of such an exercise may colour

Your loneliness. We are oft to blame in this—

'Tis too much prov'd—that with devotion's visage

And pious action we do sugar o'er

The devil himself.

King. [*Aside*] O, 'tis too true!

How smart a lash that speech doth give my
conscience!

The harlot's cheek, beautied with plastering art,

Hamlet

Is not more ugly to the thing that helps it
Than is my deed to my most painted word.
O heavy burthen!

Pol. I hear him coming; let's withdraw, my lord. [*Exeunt King and Polonius.*]

Enter Hamlet.

Ham. To be, or not to be,—that is the question :
Whether 'tis nobler in the mind to suffer
The slings and arrows of outrageous fortune,
Or to take arms against a sea of troubles,
And by opposing end them ? To die,—to sleep,—
No more ; and by a sleep to say we end
The heart-ache and the thousand natural shocks
That flesh is heir to,—'tis a consummation
Devoutly to be wish'd. To die,—to sleep,—
To sleep ! perchance to dream ! ay, there's the
rub ;

For in that sleep of death what dreams may come
When we have shuffled off this mortal coil,
Must give us pause : there's the respect
That makes calamity of so long life ;
For who would bear the whips and scorns of time,
The oppressor's wrong, the proud man's con-
tumely,

The pangs of dispriz'd love, the law's delay,
The insolence of office, and the spurns
That patient merit of the unworthy takes,
When he himself might his quietus make
With a bare bodkin*? who would fardels* {dagger
bear, {burdens

To grunt and sweat under a weary life,
But that the dread of something after death,
The undiscover'd country from whose bourn
No traveller returns, puzzles the will,
And makes us rather bear those ills we have

Act III Scene 1

Than fly to others that we know not of?
Thus conscience does make cowards of us all;
And thus the native hue of resolution
Is sicklied o'er with the pale cast of thought,
And enterprises of great pith and moment
With this regard their currents turn awry,
And lose the name of action.—Soft you now!
The fair Ophelia!—Nymph, in thy orisons
Be all my sins remember'd.

Oph. Good my lord,
How does your honour for this many a day?

Ham. I humbly thank you; well, well, well.

Oph. My lord, I have remembrances of yours,
That I have longed long to re-deliver;
I pray you, now receive them.

Ham. No, not I;
I never gave you aught.

Oph. My honour'd lord, I know right well
you did;
And with them words of so sweet breath compos'd
As made the things more rich: their perfume
lost,
Take these again; for to the noble mind
Rich gifts wax poor when givers prove unkind.
There, my lord.

Ham. Ha, ha! are you honest?

Oph. My lord?

Ham. Are you fair?

Oph. What means your lordship?

Ham. That if you be honest and fair, your
honesty should admit no discourse to your
beauty.

Oph. Could beauty, my lord, have better commerce* than with honesty?

[intercourse]

Ham. Ay, truly; for the power of beauty will

Hamlet

sooner transform honesty from what it is to a bawd than the force of honesty can translate beauty into his likeness: this was sometime a paradox, but now the time gives it proof. I did love you once.

Oph. Indeed, my lord, you made me believe so.

Ham. You should not have believed me; for virtue cannot so inoculate our old stock but we shall relish of it: I loved you not.

Oph. I was the more deceived.

Ham. Get thee to a nunnery; why wouldst thou be a breeder of sinners? I am myself indifferent honest; but yet I could accuse me of such things that it were better my mother had not borne me: I am very proud, revengeful, ambitious, with more offences at my beck than I have thoughts to put them in, imagination to give them shape, or time to act them in. What should such fellows as I do crawling between earth and heaven? We are arrant knaves all; believe none of us. Go thy ways to a nunnery. Where's your father?

Oph. At home, my lord.

Ham. Let the doors be shut upon him, that he may play the fool no where but in's own house. Farewell.

Oph. [*Aside*] O, help him, you sweet heavens!

Ham. If thou dost marry, I'll give thee this plague for thy dowry: be thou as chaste as ice, as pure as snow, thou shalt not escape calumny. Get thee to a nunnery, go; farewell. Or, if thou wilt needs marry, marry a fool; for wise men know well enough what monsters you make of them. To a nunnery, go; and quickly too. Farewell.

Oph. [*Aside*] O heavenly powers, restore him!

Act III Scene 1

Ham. I have heard of your paintings too, well enough ; God has given you one face, and you make yourselves another : you jig, you amble, and you lisp, and nickname God's creatures, and make your wantonness your ignorance. Go to, I'll no more on't ; it hath made me mad. I say, we will have no more marriages : those that are married already, all but one, shall live ; the rest shall keep as they are. To a nunnery, go. *[Exit.*

Oph. O, what a noble mind is here o'erthrown !
The courtier's, scholar's, soldier's, eye, tongue,
sword ;
The expectancy and rose of the fair state,
The glass of fashion and the mould of form,
The observ'd of all observers, quite, quite down !
And I, of ladies most deject and wretched,
That suck'd the honey of his music vows,
Now see that noble and most sovereign reason,
Like sweet bells jangled out of tune, and harsh ;
That unmatch'd form and feature of blown youth
Blasted with ecstasy : O, woe is me,
To have seen what I have seen, see what I see !

Enter King and Polonius.

King. Love ! his affections do not that way
tend ;
Nor what he spake, though it lack'd form a little,
Was not like madness. There's something in
his soul
O'er which his melancholy sits on brood.
And I do doubt the hatch and the disclose
Will be some danger ; which for to prevent,
I have in quick determination
Thus set it down : he shall with speed to Eng-
land,

Hamlet

For the demand of our neglected tribute.
Haply the seas and countries different
With variable objects shall expel
This something-settled matter in his heart,
Whereon his brains still beating puts him thus
From fashion of himself. What think you on 't?

Pol. It shall do well; but yet do I believe
The origin and commencement of his grief
Sprung from neglected love.—How now, Ophelia!
You need not tell us what Lord Hamlet said;
We heard it all.—My lord, do as you please;
But, if you hold it fit, after the play
Let his queen mother all alone entreat him
To show his grief: let her be round* with him;
And I'll be plac'd, so please you, in the ear [plain]
Of all their conference. If she find him not,
To England send him, or confine him where
Your wisdom best shall think.

King. It shall be so;
Madness in great ones must not unwatch'd go.
[Exeunt.]

SCENE 2.—A Hall in the Castle.

Enter Hamlet and Players.

Ham. Speak the speech, I pray you, as I pronounced it to you, trippingly on the tongue; but if you mouth it, as many of your players do, I had as lief the town-crier spoke my lines. Nor do not saw the air too much with your hand, thus, but use all gently; for in the very torrent, tempest, and, as I may say, the whirlwind of passion, you must acquire and beget a temperance that may give it smoothness. O, it offends me to the soul to hear a robustious periwig-pated fellow tear a passion to tatters,

Act III Scene 2

to very rags, to split the ears of the groundlings, who for the most part are capable of nothing but inexplicable dumb-shows and noise. I could have such a fellow whipped for o'erdoing Ter-magant; it out-herods Herod: pray you, avoid it.

1st Play. I warrant your honour.

Ham. Be not too tame neither, but let your own discretion be your tutor: suit the action to the word, the word to the action; with this special observance, that you o'erstep not the modesty of nature; for any thing so overdone is from the purpose of playing, whose end, both at the first and now, was and is, to hold, as 'twere, the mirror up to nature; to show virtue her own feature, scorn her own image, and the very age and body of the time his form and pressure. Now this overdone, or come tardy off, though it make the unskilful laugh, cannot but make the judicious grieve; the censure of the which one must in your allowance o'erweigh a whole theatre of others. O, there be players that I have seen play, and heard others praise, and that highly, not to speak it profanely, that, neither having the accent of Christians nor the gait of Christian, pagan, nor man, have so strutted and bellowed that I have thought some of nature's journeymen had made men and not made them well, they imitated humanity so abominably.

1st Play. I hope we have reformed that indifferently with us, sir.

Ham. O, reform it altogether. And let those that play your clowns speak no more than is set down for them; for there be of them that will themselves laugh, to set on some quantity of barren spectators to laugh too, though in the

Hamlet

mean time some necessary question of the play
be then to be considered : that's villanous, and
shows a most pitiful ambition in the fool that
uses it. Go, make you ready. [*Exeunt Players.*

Enter Polonius, Rosencrantz, and Guildenstern.

How now, my lord ! will the king hear this piece
of work ?

Pol. And the queen too, and that presently.

Ham. Bid the players make haste.

[*Exit Polonius.*

Will you two help to hasten them ?

Ros. } We will, my lord.
Guil. }

[*Exeunt Rosencrantz and Guildenstern.*

Ham. What ho ! Horatio !

Enter Horatio.

Hor. Here, sweet lord, at your service.

Ham. Horatio, thou art e'en as just a man
As e'er my conversation cop'd withal.

Hor. O, my dear lord,—

Ham. Nay, do not think I flatter ;
For what advancement may I hope from thee
That no revenue hast but thy good spirits,
To feed and clothe thee ? Why should the poor
be flatter'd ?

No, let the candied tongue lick absurd pomp,
And crook the pregnant* hinges of the knee [*ready*
Where thrift may follow fawning. Dost thou
hear ?

Since my dear soul was mistress of her choice
And could of men distinguish, her election
Hath seal'd thee for herself ; for thou hast been
As one, in suffering all, that suffers nothing,
A man that fortune's buffets and rewards
Hath ta'en with equal thanks : and blest are those

Act III Scene 2

Whose blood and judgment are so well commingled

That they are not a pipe for Fortune's finger
To sound what stop she please. Give me that man
That is not passion's slave, and I will wear him
In my heart's core, ay, in my heart of heart,
As I do thee.—Something too much of this.—
There is a play to-night before the king;
One scene of it comes near the circumstance
Which I have told thee of my father's death:
I prithee, when thou seest that act afoot,
Even with the very comment of thy soul
Observe mine uncle; if his occulted guilt
Do not itself unkennel in one speech,
It is a damned ghost that we have seen,
And my imaginations are as foul
As Vulcan's stithy. Give him heedful note;
For I mine eyes will rivet to his face,
And after we will both our judgments join
In censure of his seeming.

Hor.

Well, my lord:

If he steal aught the whilst this play is playing,
And scape detecting, I will pay the theft.

Ham. They are coming to the play; I must
be idle:

Get you a place.

Danish march. A flourish. Enter King, Queen, Polonius, Ophelia, Rosencrantz, Guildenstern, and others.

King. How fares our cousin Hamlet?

Ham. Excellent, i' faith; of the chameleon's dish: I eat the air, promise-crammed; you cannot feed capons so.

King. I have nothing with this answer, Hamlet; these words are not mine.

Hamlet

Ham. No, nor mine now. [*To Polonius*] My lord, you played once i' the university, you say?

Pol. That did I, my lord, and was accounted a good actor.

Ham. What did you enact?

Pol. I did enact Julius Cæsar: I was killed i' the Capitol; Brutus killed me.

Ham. It was a brute part of him to kill so capital a calf there.—Be the players ready?

Ros. Ay, my lord; they stay upon your patience.

Queen. Come hither, my dear Hamlet, sit by me.

Ham. No, good mother, here's metal more attractive. [*Lying down at Ophelia's feet.*]

Pol. [*To the King*] O, ho! do you mark that?

Ham. Lady, shall I lie in your lap?

Oph. No, my lord.

Ham. I mean, my head upon your lap?

Oph. Ay, my lord.

Ham. Do you think I meant country matters?

Oph. I think nothing, my lord.

Ham. That's a fair thought to lie between maids' legs.

Oph. What is, my lord?

Ham. Nothing.

Oph. You are merry, my lord.

Ham. Who, I?

Oph. Ay, my lord.

Ham. O God, your only jig-maker.* [*ballad-maker*] What should a man do but be merry? for, look you, how cheerfully my mother looks, and my father died within 's two hours.

Oph. Nay, 'tis twice two months, my lord.

Ham. So long? Nay then, let the devil wear black, for I'll have a suit of sables. O heavens!

Act III Scene 2

die two months ago, and not forgotten yet? Then there's hope a great man's memory may outlive his life half a year: but, by'r lady, he must build churches, then; or else shall he suffer not thinking on, with the hobby-horse, whose epitaph is 'For, O, for, O, the hobby-horse is forgot!

Hautboys play. The dumb-show enters.

Enter a King and a Queen very lovingly; the Queen embracing him, and he her. She kneels, and makes show of protestation unto him. He takes her up, and declines his head upon her neck; lays him down upon a bank of flowers: she, seeing him asleep, leaves him. Anon comes in a fellow, takes off his crown, kisses it, and pours poison in the King's ears, and exit. The Queen returns, finds the King dead, and makes passionate action. The Poisoner, with some two or three Mutes, comes in again, seeming to lament with her. The dead body is carried away. The Poisoner wooes the Queen with gifts; she seems loath and unwilling awhile, but in the end accepts his love. [Exeunt.

Oph. What means this, my lord?

Ham. Marry, this is *nicking mallecho**; it means mischief. [sneaking mischief

Oph. Belike this show imports the argument of the play?

Enter Prologue.

Ham. We shall know by this fellow: the players cannot keep counsel; they'll tell all.

Oph. Will he tell us what this show meant?

Ham. Ay, or any show that you'll show him;

Hamlet

be not you ashamed to show, he'll not shame to tell you what it means.

Oph. You are naught, you are naught; I'll mark the play.

Pro. For us, and for our tragedy,
Here stooping to your clemency,
We beg your hearing patiently. [*Exit.*

Ham. Is this a prologue, or the posy* of motto a ring?

Oph. 'Tis brief, my lord.

Ham. As woman's love.

Enter two Players, King and Queen.

P. King. Full thirty times hath Phoebus' cart gone round

Neptune's salt wash and Tellus' orb'd ground,
And thirty dozen moons with borrow'd sheen
About the world have times twelve thirties been,
Since love our hearts and Hymen did our hands
Unite commutual in most sacred bands.

P. Queen. So many journeys may the sun and moon
Make us again count o'er ere love be done!
But, woe is me, you are so sick of late,
So far from cheer and from your former state,
That I distrust you. Yet, though I distrust,
Discomfort you, my lord, it nothing must;
For women's fear and love holds quantity,
In neither aught, or in extremity.
Now, what my love is, proof hath made you know,
And as my love is siz'd, my fear is so;
Where love is great, the littlest doubts are fear;
Where little fears grow great, great love grows there

P. King. Faith, I must leave thee, love, and shortly too;
My operant powers their functions leave to do:
And thou shalt live in this fair world behind,
Honour'd, belov'd; and haply one as kind
For husband shalt thou—

P. Queen. O, confound the rest!
Such love must needs be treason in my breast;
In second husband let me be accurst!
None wed the second but who kill'd the first.

Act III Scene 2

Ham. [Aside] Wormwood, wormwood!

P. Queen. The instances that second marriage move
Are base respects of thrift, but none of love;
A second time I kill my husband dead,
When second husband kisses me in bed.

P. King. I do believe you think what now you speak,
But what we do determine oft we break.
Purpose is but the slave to memory,
Of violent birth, but poor validity*;
Which now, like fruit unripe, sticks on the tree,
But fall unshaken when they mellow be.
Most necessary 'tis that we forget
To pay ourselves what to ourselves is debt;
What to ourselves in passion we propose,
The passion ending, doth the purpose lose.
The violence of either grief or joy
Their own enactures with themselves destroy:
Where joy most revels, grief doth most lament;
Grief joys, joy grieves, on slender accident.
This world is not for aye, nor 'tis not strange
That even our loves should with our fortunes change:
For 'tis a question left us yet to prove,
Whether love lead fortune or else fortune love.
The great man down, you mark his favourites flies;
The poor advanc'd makes friends of enemies.
And hitherto doth love on fortune tend;
For who not needs shall never lack a friend,
And who in want a hollow friend doth try
Directly seasons him his enemy.
But, orderly to end where I begun,
Our wills and fates do so contrary run
That our devices still are overthrown,
Our thoughts are ours, their ends none of our own;
So think thou wilt no second husband wed,
But die thy thoughts when thy first lord is dead.

P. Queen. Nor earth to me give food, nor heaven light!
Sport and repose lock from me day and night!
To desperation turn my trust and hope!
An anchor's* cheer in prison be my scope!
Each opposite that blanks* the face of joy
Meet what I would have well and it destroy!
Both here and hence pursue me lasting strife.
If, once a widow, ever I be wife!

[value

[anchorite's
[blanches

Hamlet

Ham. If she should break it now!

P. King. 'Tis deeply sworn. Sweet, leave me here a while;

My spirits grow dull, and fain I would beguile
The tedious day with sleep. [*Sleeps.*]

P. Queen. Sleep rock thy brain;
And never come mischance between us twain! [*Exit.*]

Ham. Madam, how like you this play?

Queen. The lady protests too much, methinks.

Ham. O, but she'll keep her word.

King. Have you heard the argument? Is there no offence in't?

Ham. No, no, they do but jest, poison in jest;
no offence i' the world.

King. What do you call the play?

Ham. The Mouse-trap. Marry, how? Tropically.* This play is the image of a [figuratively] murder done in Vienna: Gonzago is the duke's name; his wife, Baptista: you shall see anon; 'tis a knavish piece of work: but what o' that? your majesty and we that have free souls, it touches us not; let the galled jade wince, our withers are unwrung.

Enter Lucianus.

This is one Lucianus, nephew to the king.

Oph. You are as good as a chorus, my lord.

Ham. I could interpret between you and your love, if I could see the puppets dallying.

Oph. You are keen, my lord, you are keen.

Ham. It would cost you a groaning to take off my edge.

Oph. Still better, and worse.

Ham. So you must take your husbands.—Begin, murderer; pox, leave thy damnable faces, and begin. Come: 'the croaking raven doth bellow for revenge.'

Act III Scene 2

Lue. Thoughts black, hands apt, drugs fit, and time agreeing ;
Confederate season, else no creature seeing ;
Thou mixture rank, of midnight weeds collected,
With Hecate's ban thrice blasted, thrice infected,
Thy natural magic and dire property,
On wholesome life usurp immediately.

[Pours the poison into the sleeper's ear.]

Ham. He poisons him i' the garden for's estate. His name's Gonzago; the story is extant, and writ in choice Italian. You shall see anon how the murtherer gets the love of Gonzago's wife.

Oph. The king rises !

Ham. What, frightened with false fire !

Queen. How fares my lord ?

Pol. Give o'er the play !

King. Give me some light !—away !

All. Lights, lights, lights !

[Exeunt all but Hamlet and Horatio.]

Ham.

Why, let the stricken deer go weep,

The hart ungalled play ;

For some must watch, while some must sleep :

So runs the world away.

Would not this, sir, and a forest of feathers—
if the rest of my fortunes turn Turk with me
—with two Provincial* roses on my [Provençal
razed* shoes, get me a fellowship in a [slashed
cry* of players, sir? [company

Hor. Half a share.

Ham. A whole one, I.

For thou dost know, O Damon dear,

This realm dismantled was

Of Jove himself ; and now reigns here

A very, very—pajock.

Hor. You might have rhymed.

Hamlet

Ham. O good Horatio, I'll take the ghost's word for a thousand pound. Didst perceive?

Hor. Very well, my lord.

Ham. Upon the talk of the poisoning?

Hor. I did very well note him.

Ham. Ah, ha! Come, some music! come, the recorders!

For if the king like not the comedy,

Why then, belike,—he likes it not, perdy.—
Come, some music!

Re-enter Rosencrantz and Guildenstern.

Guil. Good my lord, vouchsafe me a word with you.

Ham. Sir, a whole history.

Guil. The king, sir,—

Ham. Ay, sir, what of him?

Guil. Is in his retirement marvellous dis-tempered.

Ham. With drink, sir?

Guil. No, my lord, rather with choler.

Ham. Your wisdom should show itself more richer to signify this to his doctor; for, for me to put him to his purgation would perhaps plunge him into far more choler.

Guil. Good my lord, put your discourse into some frame, and start not so wildly from my affair.

Ham. I am tame, sir; pronounce.

Guil. The queen, your mother, in most great affliction of spirit, hath sent me to you.

Ham. You are welcome.

Guil. Nay, good my lord, this courtesy is not of the right breed. If it shall please you to make me a wholesome answer, I will do your mother's commandment; if not, your

Act III Scene 2

pardon and my return shall be the end of my business.

Ham. Sir, I cannot.

Guil. What, my lord?

Ham. Make you a wholesome answer; my wit's diseased: but, sir, such answer as I can make, you shall command,—or, rather, as you say, my mother; therefore no more, but to the matter: my mother, you say,—

Ros. Then thus she says: your behaviour hath struck her into amazement and admiration.

Ham. O wonderful son, that can so astonish a mother! But is there no sequel at the heels of this mother's admiration? Impart.

Ros. She desires to speak with you in her closet, ere you go to bed.

Ham. We shall obey, were she ten times our mother. Have you any further trade with us?

Ros. My lord, you once did love me.

Ham. So I do still, by these pickers and stealers.*

[hands

Ros. Good my lord, what is your cause of distemper? you do, surely, bar the door upon your own liberty, if you deny your griefs to your friend.

Ham. Sir, I lack advancement.

Ros. How can that be, when you have the voice of the king himself for your succession in Denmark?

Ham. Ay, sir, but 'while the grass grows,'—the proverb is something musty.

[sweet toned flutes

*Re-enter Players with recorders.**

O, the recorders! let me see one.—To withdraw* with you,—why do you go [speak privately

Hamlet

about to recover the wind* of me, [get to windward as if you would drive me into a toil?

Guil. O, my lord, if my duty be too bold, my love is too unmannerly.

Ham. I do not well understand that. Will you play upon this pipe?

Guil. My lord, I cannot.

Ham. I pray you.

Guil. Believe me, I cannot.

Ham. I do beseech you.

Guil. I know no touch of it, my lord.

Ham. 'Tis as easy as lying; govern these ventages with your fingers and thumb, give it breath with your mouth, and it will discourse most eloquent music. Look you, these are the stops.

Guil. But these cannot I command to any utterance of harmony; I have not the skill.

Ham. Why, look you now, how unworthy a thing you make of me! you would play upon me; you would seem to know my stops; you would pluck out the heart of my mystery; you would sound me from my lowest note to the top of my compass: and there is much music, excellent voice, in this little organ; yet cannot you make it speak. 'Sblood, do you think I am easier to be played on than a pipe? Call me what instrument you will, though you can fret me, you cannot play upon me.

Enter Polonius.

God bless you, sir!

Pol. My lord, the queen would speak with you, and presently.

Ham. Do you see yonder cloud that's almost in shape of a camel?

Act III Scene 3

Pol. By the mass, and 'tis like a camel, indeed.

Ham. Methinks it is like a weasel.

Pol. It is backed like a weasel.

Ham. Or like a whale?

Pol. Very like a whale.

Ham. Then will I come to my mother by and by. [*Aside*] They fool me to the top of my bent.—I will come by and by.

Pol. I will say so. [*Exit Polonius.*]

Ham. By and by is easily said.—Leave me, friends. [*Exeunt all but Hamlet.*]

'Tis now the very witching time of night,
When churchyards yawn, and hell itself
breathes out

Contagion to this world; now could I drink
hot blood,

And do such bitter business as the day
Would quake to look on. Soft! now to my
mother.

O heart, lose not thy nature; let not ever

The soul of Nero enter this firm bosom;

Let me be cruel, not unnatural.

I will speak daggers to her, but use none;

My tongue and soul in this be hypocrites:

How in my words soever she be shent,* [*reproached*]

To give them seals* never, my soul, [*confirmation*]
consent! [*Exit.*]

SCENE 3.—A Room in the Castle.

Enter King, Rosencrantz, and Guildenstern.

King. I like him not, nor stands it safe with us
To let his madness range. Therefore prepare
you;

I your commission will forthwith dispatch,
And he to England shall along with you.

Hamlet

The terms of our estate may not endure
Hazard so near us as doth hourly grow
Out of his lunacies.

Guil. We will ourselves provide ;
Most holy and religious fear it is
To keep those many many bodies safe
That live and feed upon your majesty.

Ros. The single and peculiar life is bound
With all the strength and armour of the mind
To keep itself from noyance ; but much more
That spirit upon whose weal depend and rest
The lives of many. The cease of majesty
Dies not alone, but like a gulf doth draw
What's near it with it : it is a massy wheel,
Fix'd on the summit of the highest mount,
To whose huge spokes ten thousand lesser things
Are mortis'd and adjoin'd ; which, when it falls,
Each small annexment, petty consequence,
Attends the boisterous ruin. Never alone
Did the king sigh, but with a general groan.

King. Arm you, I pray you, to this speedy
voyage ;
For we will fetters put upon this fear,
Which now goes too free-footed.

Ros. } We will haste us.
Guil. }

[Exeunt Rosencrantz and Guildenstern.]

Enter Polonius.

Pol. My lord, he's going to his mother's closet.
Behind the arras I'll convey myself,
To hear the process ; I'll warrant she'll tax him
home* : [thoroughly]
And, as you said, and wisely was it said,
'Tis meet that some more audience than a
mother,

Act III Scene 3

Since nature makes them partial, should o'erhear
The speech, of vantage.* [from an advantageous post

Fare you well, my liege ;

I'll call upon you ere you go to bed,

And tell you what I know.

King.

Thanks, dear my lord.

[*Exit Polonius.*]

O, my offence is rank, it smells to heaven ;

It hath the primal eldest curse upon 't,

A brother's murther ! Pray can I not,

Though inclination be as sharp as will ;

My stronger guilt defeats my strong intent,

And, like a man to double business bound,

I stand in pause where I shall first begin,

And both neglect. What if this cursed hand

Were thicker than itself with brother's blood,

Is there not rain enough in the sweet heavens

To wash it white as snow ? Whereto serves
mercy

But to confront the visage of offence ?

And what's in prayer but this twofold force,—

To be forestalled ere we come to fall,

Or pardon'd being down ? Then I'll look up ;

My fault is past. But, O, what form of prayer

Can serve my turn ? 'Forgive me my foul
murther ?'

That cannot be ; since I am still possess'd

Of those effects for which I did the murther,

My crown, mine own ambition, and my queen.

May one be pardon'd and retain the offence ?

In the corrupted currents of this world

Offence's gilded hand may shove by justice,

And oft 'tis seen the wicked prize itself

Buys out the law ; but 'tis not so above :

There is no shuffling, there the action lies

In his true nature, and we ourselves compell'd

Hamlet

Even to the teeth and forehead of our faults
To give in evidence. What then? what rests?
Try what repentance can: what can it not?
Yet what can it when one can not repent?
O wretched state! O bosom black as death!
O limed soul, that struggling to be free
Art more engag'd! Help, angels! Make assay!
Bow, stubborn knees; and, heart with strings of
steel,
Be soft as sinews of the new-born babe!
All may be well. *[Retires and kneels.*

Enter Hamlet.

Ham. Now might I do it pat, now he is praying;
And now I'll do 't.—And so he goes to heaven;
And so am I reveng'd. That would be scann'd:
A villain kills my father; and for that,
I, his sole son, do this same villain send
To heaven.

O, this is hire and salary, not revenge.
He took my father grossly, full of bread,
With all his crimes broad blown, as fresh as May;
And how his audit stands who knows save
heaven?

But in our circumstance and course of thought,
'Tis heavy with him; and am I then reveng'd,
To take him in the purging of his soul,
When he is fit and season'd for his passage?
No!

[grip]
Up, sword, and know thou a more horrid hent*:
When he is drunk asleep, or in his rage,
Or in the incestuous pleasure of his bed;
At gaming, swearing, or about some act
That has no relish of salvation in 't;
Then trip him, that his heels may kick at heaven,
And that his soul may be as damn'd and black

Act III Scene 4

As hell, whereto it goes. My mother stays.—
This physic but prolongs thy sickly days. [*Exit.*]

King. [*Rising*] My words fly up, my thoughts
remain below ;
Words without thoughts never to heaven go.
[*Exit.*]

SCENE 4.—The Queen's Closet.

Enter Queen and Polonius.

Pol. He will come straight. Look you lay home
to him ;
Tell him his pranks have been too broad to bear
with,
And that your grace hath screen'd and stood
between
Much heat and him. I'll sconce me even here.
Pray you, be round with him.

Ham. [*Within*] Mother! mother! mother!

Queen. I'll warrant you ;
Fear me not. Withdraw, I hear him coming.
[*Polonius hides behind the arras.*]

Enter Hamlet.

Ham. Now, mother, what's the matter?

Queen. Hamlet, thou hast thy father much
offended.

Ham. Mother, you have my father much
offended.

Queen. Come, come, you answer with an idle
tongue.

Ham. Go, go, you question with a wicked
tongue.

Queen. Why, how now, Hamlet!

Ham. What's the matter now?

Queen. Have you forgot me?

Ham. No, by the rood, not so:

Hamlet .

You are the queen, your husband's brother's wife ;

And—would it were not so !—you are my mother.

Queen. Nay, then, I'll set those to you that can speak.

Ham. Come, come, and sit you down ; you shall not budge :

You go not till I set you up a glass

Where you may see the inmost part of you.

Queen. What wilt thou do ? thou wilt not murder me ?

Help, help, ho !

Pol. [*Behind*] What, ho ! help, help, help !

Ham. [*Drawing*] How now ! a rat ? Dead, for a ducat, dead !

[Makes a pass through the arras.]

Pol. [*Behind*] O, I am slain ! [*Falls and dies.*]

Queen. O me, what hast thou done ?

Ham. Nay, I know not ;

Is it the king ?

Queen. O, what a rash and bloody deed is this !

Ham. A bloody deed ! almost as bad, good mother,

As kill a king, and marry with his brother.

Queen. As kill a king !

Ham. Ay, lady, 'twas my word.

[Lifts up the arras and discovers Polonius.]

Thou wretched, rash, intruding fool, farewell !

I took thee for thy better : take thy fortune ;

Thou find'st to be too busy is some danger.—

Leave wringing of your hands : peace ! sit you down,

And let me wring your heart ; for so I shall,

If it be made of penetrable stuff,

If damned custom have not brass'd it so

That it is proof and bulwark against sense.

Act III Scene 4

Queen. What have I done, that thou darest
wag thy tongue
In noise so rude against me?

Ham. Such an act
That blurs the grace and blush of modesty,
Calls virtue hypocrite, takes off the rose
From the fair forehead of an innocent love
And sets a blister there, makes marriage-vows
As false as dicers' oaths; O, such a deed
As from the body of contraction* [marriage contract
plucks

The very soul, and sweet religion makes
A rhapsody of words: heaven's face doth glow,
Yea, this solidity* and compound mass, [the earth
With tristful visage, as against the doom,
Is thought-sick at the act.

Queen. Ay me, what act, [prologue
That roars so loud and thunders in the index*?

Ham. Look here, upon this picture, and on this,
The counterfeit presentment of two brothers.
See, what a grace was seated on this brow:
Hyperion's curls; the front of Jove himself;
An eye like Mars, to threaten and command;
A station like the herald Mercury
New-lighted on a heaven-kissing hill;
A combination and a form indeed,
Where every god did seem to set his seal,
To give the world assurance of a man.
This was your husband. Look you now, what
follows:

Here is your husband; 'like a mildew'd ear,
Blasting his wholesome brother. Have you eyes?
Could you on this fair mountain leave to feed,
And batten on this moor? Ha! have you eyes?
You cannot call it love, for at your age
The hey-day in the blood is tame, it's humble,

Hamlet

And waits upon the judgment ; and what judgment

Would step from this to this ? Sense, sure, you have,

Else could you not have motion ; but sure, that sense

Is apoplex'd : for madness would not err,

Nor sense to ecstasy was ne'er so thrall'd

But it reserv'd some quantity of choice,

To serve in such a difference. What devil was 't

That thus hath cozen'd you at hoodman-blind ?

Eyes without feeling, feeling without sight,

Ears without hands or eyes, smelling sans all,

Or but a sickly part of one true sense

Could not so mope.

O shame ! where is thy blush ? Rebellious hell,

If thou canst mutine in a matron's bones,

To flaming youth let virtue be as wax,

And melt in her own fire ; proclaim no shame

When the compulsive ardour gives the charge,

Since frost itself as actively doth burn,

And reason panders will.

Queen. O Hamlet, speak no more ;

Thou turn'st mine eyes into my very soul,

And there I see such black and grained spots

As will not leave their tinct.* [stain

Ham. Nay, but to live

Stew'd in corruption, honeying, and making

love

Over the nasty sty,—

Queen. O, speak to me no more ;

These words like daggers enter in mine ears :

No more, sweet Hamlet !

Ham. A murderer and a villain ;

A slave that is not twentieth part the tithe

Of your precedent lord ; a vice of kings ;

Act III Scene 4

A cutpurse of the empire and the rule,
That from a shelf the precious diadem stole,
And put it in his pocket!

Queen. No more!

Ham. A king of shreds and patches,—

Enter Ghost.

Save me, and hover o'er me with your wings,
You heavenly guards!—What would your
gracious figure?

Queen. Alas! he's mad!

Ham. Do you not come your tardyson to chide,
That, laps'd in time and passion, lets go by
The important acting of your dread command?
O, say!

Ghost. Do not forget. This visitation
Is but to whet thy almost blunted purpose.
But, look, amazement on thy mother sits:
O, step between her and her fighting soul;
Conceit in weakest bodies strongest works.
Speak to her, Hamlet.

Ham. How is it with you, lady?

Queen. Alas, how is't with you,
That you do bend your eye on vacancy
And with the incorporal air do hold discourse?
Forth at your eyes your spirits wildly peep;
And, as the sleeping soldiers in the alarm,
Your bedded* hair, like life in excre- [flattened
ments,* [outgrowths, as hair, etc.
Starts up, and stands an end. O gentle son,
Upon the heat and flame of thy distemper
Sprinkle cool patience. Whereon do you look?

Ham. On him, on him! Look you, how pale
he glares!

His form and cause conjoin'd, preaching to
stones,

Hamlet

Would make them capable.—Do not look upon me ;

Lest with this piteous action you convert
My stern effects* : then what I have to do [purposes
Will want true colour ; tears perchance for blood.

Queen. To whom do you speak this ?

Ham. Do you see nothing there ?

Queen. Nothing at all ; yet all that is I see.

Ham. Nor did you nothing hear ?

Queen. No, nothing but ourselves.

Ham. Why, look you there ! look, how it
steals away !

My father, in his habit as he liv'd !

Look, where he goes, even now, out at the portal !
[*Exit Ghost.*

Queen. This is the very coinage of your brain ;
This bodiless creation ecstasy
Is very cunning in.

Ham. Ecstasy !

My pulse, as yours, doth temperately keep time,
And makes as healthful music : it is not madness
That I have utter'd ; bring me to the test,
And I the matter will re-word, which madness
Would gambol from. Mother, for love of grace,
Lay not that flattering unction to your soul,
That not your trespass but my madness speaks ;
It will but skin and film the ulcerous place,
Whilst rank corruption, mining all within,
Infects unseen. Confess yourself to heaven ;
Repent what's past, avoid what is to come ;
And do not spread the compost on the weeds,
To make them ranker. Forgive me this my
virtue ;

For in the fatness of these pursy* times [rampered
Virtue itself of vice must pardon beg, [bow and bend
Yea, curb and woo* for leave to do him good.

Act III Scene 4

Queen. O Hamlet, thou hast cleft my heart in twain.

Ham. O, throw away the worser part of it,
And live the purer with the other half.
Good night: but go not to mine uncle's bed;
Assume a virtue, if you have it not.
That monster, custom, who all sense doth eat,
Of habits devil, is angel yet in this,
That to the use of actions fair and good
He likewise gives a frock or livery,
That aptly is put on. Refrain to-night,
And that shall lend a kind of easiness
To the next abstinence: the next more easy;
For use almost can change the stamp of nature,
And either master the devil, or throw him out
With wondrous potency. Once more, good
night:

And when you are desirous to be blest,
I'll blessing beg of you.—For this same lord,
[*Pointing to Polonius.*

I do repent; but heaven hath pleas'd it so,
To punish me with this and this with me,
That I must be their scourge and minister.
I will bestow him, and will answer well
The death I gave him.—So, again, good night.
I must be cruel, only to be kind;
Thus bad begins, and worse remains behind.
One word more, good lady.

Queen. What shall I do?

Ham. Not this, by no means, that I bid you do:
Let the bloat king tempt you again to bed,
Pinch wanton on your cheek, call you his mouse;
And let him, for a pair of reechy kisses,
Or paddling in your neck with his damn'd fingers
Make you to ravel all this matter out,
That I essentially am not in madness,

Hamlet

But mad in craft. 'Twere good you let him know;
For who, that's but a queen, fair, sober, wise,
Would from a paddock,* from a bat, a gib,*

[toad, bat, cat

Such dear concernings hide? who would do so?
No, in despite of sense and secrecy, [let out the mystery
Unpeg the basket* on the house's top,
Let the birds fly, and, like the famous ape,
To try conclusions, in the basket creep,
And break your own neck down.

Queen. Be thou assur'd, if words be made of
breath,
And breath of life, I have no life to breathe
What thou hast said to me.

Ham. I must to England; you know that?

Queen. Alack,
I had forgot; 'tis so concluded on.

Ham. There's letters seal'd, and my two
schoolfellows—
Whom I will trust as I will adders fang'd—
They bear the mandate; they must sweep my
way,

And marshal me to knavery. Let it work;
For 'tis the sport to have the engineer
Hoist with his own petar: and 't shall go hard
But I will delve one yard below their mines,
And blow them at the moon. O, 'tis most sweet,
When in one line two crafts directly meet!

This man shall set me packing*; [off in a hurry
I'll lug the guts into the neighbour room.

Mother, good night. Indeed this counsellor
Is now most still, most secret, and most grave,
Who was in life a foolish prating knave.—
Come, sir, to draw toward an end with you.—
Good night, mother. [*Exeunt severally;*

Hamlet dragging in Polonius.

Act IV Scene 1

ACT IV.

SCENE I.—A Room in the Castle.

Enter King, Queen, Rosencrantz, and Guildenstern.

King. There's matter in these sighs: these
 profound heaves
You must translate; 'tis fit we understand them.
Where is your son?

Queen. Bestow this place on us a little while.
 [*Exeunt Rosencrantz and Guildenstern.*

Ah, my good lord, what have I seen to-night!

King. What, Gertrude? How does Hamlet?

Queen. Mad as the sea and wind, when both
 contend

Which is the mightier; in his lawless fit,
Behind the arras hearing something stir,
Whips out his rapier, cries, 'A rat, a rat!'
And in this brainish* apprehension kills [imaginary
The unseen good old man.

King. O heavy deed!
It had been so with us, had we been there;
His liberty is full of threats to all,
To you yourself, to us, to every one.
Alas, how shall this bloody deed be answer'd?
It will be laid to us, whose providence
Should have kept short, restrain'd, and out of
 haunt,

This mad young man; but so much was our love,
We would not understand what was most fit,
But, like the owner of a foul disease,
To keep it from divulging, let it feed
Even on the pith of life. Where is he gone?

Queen. To draw apart the body he hath kill'd;
O'er whom his very madness, like some ore

Hamlet

Among a mineral of metals base,
Shows itself pure. He weeps for what is done.

King. O Gertrude, come away!

The sun no sooner shall the mountains touch,
But we will ship him hence; and this vile deed
We must, with all our majesty and skill,
Both countenance and excuse.—Ho, Guilden-
stern!

Re-enter Rosencrantz and Guildenstern.

Friends both, go join you with some further aid;
Hamlet in madness hath Polonius slain,
And from his mother's closet hath he dragg'd
him.

Go seek him out; speak fair, and bring the body
Into the chapel. I pray you, haste in this.

[Exeunt Rosencrantz and Guildenstern.]

Come, Gertrude, we'll call up our wisest friends,
And let them know both what we mean to do
And what's untimely done; so, haply, slander—
Whose whisper o'er the world's diameter,
As level as the cannon to his blank,*

Transports his poison'd shot—may miss our
name,

[white centre of a butt

[invulnerable

And hit the woundless* air. O, come away!
My soul is full of discord and dismay. *[Exeunt.]*

SCENE 2.—Another Room in the Castle.

Enter Hamlet.

Ham. Safely stowed.

Ros. } *[Within]* Hamlet! Lord Hamlet!
Guil. }

Ham. What noise? who calls on Hamlet? O,
here they come.

Act IV Scene 2

Enter Rosencrantz and Guildenstern.

Ros. What have you done, my lord, with the dead body?

Ham. Compounded it with dust, whereto 'tis kin.

Ros. Tell us where 'tis, that we may take it thence

And bear it to the chapel.

Ham. Do not believe it.

Ros. Believe what?

Ham. That I can keep your counsel and not mine own. Besides, to be demanded of a sponge, what replication* should be made ^{freely} by the son of a king?

Ros. Take you me for a sponge, my lord?

Ham. Ay, sir, that soaks up the king's countenance, his rewards, his authorities. But such officers do the king best service in the end; he keeps them, as an ape doth nuts, in the corner of his jaw, first mouthed, to be last swallowed: when he needs what you have gleaned, it is but squeezing you, and, sponge, you shall be dry again.

Ros. I understand you not, my lord.

Ham. I am glad of it; a knavish speech sleeps in a foolish ear.

Ros. My lord, you must tell us where the body is, and go with us to the king.

Ham. The body is with the king, but the king is not with the body. The king is a thing—

Guil. A thing, my lord!

Ham. Of nothing; bring me to him. Hide fox, and all after.

[Exeunt.]

Hamlet

SCENE 3.—Another Room in the Castle.

Enter King, attended.

King. I have sent to seek him, and to find the body.

How dangerous is it that this man goes loose !
Yet must not we put the strong law on him :
He 's lov'd of the distracted multitude,
Who like not in their judgment, but their eyes ;
And where 'tis so, the offender's scourge is
weigh'd,

But never the offence. To bear all smooth and
even,

This sudden sending him away must seem
Deliberate pause ; diseases desperate grown
By desperate appliance are reliev'd,
Or not at all.

Enter Rosencrantz.

How now ! what hath befallen ?

Ros. Where the dead body is bestow'd, my lord,
We cannot get from him.

King. But where is he ?

Ros. Without, my lord ; guarded, to know
your pleasure.

King. Bring him before us.

Ros. Ho, Guildenstern ! bring in my lord.

Enter Hamlet and Guildenstern.

King. Now, Hamlet, where's Polonius ?

Ham. At supper.

King. At supper ! where ?

Ham. Not where he eats, but where he is
eaten ; a certain convocation of politic worms
are e'en at him. Your worm is your only
emperor for diet ; we fat all creatures else to
fat us, and we fat ourselves for maggots. Your

Act IV Scene 3

fat king and your lean beggar is but variable service, two dishes, but to one table; that's the end.

King. Alas, alas!

Ham. A man may fish with the worm that hath eat of a king, and eat of the fish that hath fed of that worm.

King. What dost thou mean by this?

Ham. Nothing but to show you how a king may go a progress through the guts of a beggar.

King. Where is Polonius?

Ham. In heaven; send thither to see: if your messenger find him not there, seek him i' the other place yourself. But indeed, if you find him not within this month, you shall nose him as you go up the stairs into the lobby.

King. Go seek him there.

[*To some Attendants.*

Ham. He will stay till ye come.

[*Exeunt Attendants.*

King. Hamlet, this deed, for thine especial safety,—

Which we do tender, as we dearly grieve
For that which thou hast done,—must send thee
hence

With fiery quickness; therefore prepare thyself.
The bark is ready, and the wind at help,
The associates tend,* and every thing is bent [*attend*
For England.

Ham. For England!

King. Ay, Hamlet.

Ham. Good.

King. So is it, if thou knew'st our purposes.

Ham. I see a cherub that sees them.—But,
come; for England!—Farewell, dear mother.

King. Thy loving father, Hamlet.

Hamlet

Ham. My mother : father and mother is man and wife ; man and wife is one flesh ; and so, my mother.—Come, for England ! [*Exit.*

King. Follow him at foot ; tempt him with speed aboard ;

Delay it not ; I'll have him hence to-night.

Away ! for every thing is seal'd and done

That else leans on the affair ; pray you, make haste. [*Exeunt Ros. and Guil.*

And, England, if my love thou hold'st at aught—
As my great power thereof may give thee sense,

Since yet thy cicatrice looks raw and red

After the Danish sword, and thy free awe

Pays homage to us—thou may'st not coldly set

Our sovereign process ; which imports at full,

By letters conjuring to that effect,

The present death of Hamlet. Do it, England ;

For like the hectic in my blood he rages,

And thou must cure me : till I know 'tis done,

Howe'er my haps, my joys were ne'er begun.

[*Exit.*

SCENE 4.—A Plain in Denmark.

Enter Fortinbras, a Captain, and Soldiers, marching.

For. Go, captain, from me greet the Danish king ;

Tell him that by his license Fortinbras

Claims the conveyance of a promis'd march

Over his kingdom. You know the rendezvous.

If that his majesty would aught with us,

We shall express our duty in his eye ;

And let him know so.

Cap. I will do 't, my lord.

For. Go softly on. [*Exeunt For. and Soldiers.*

Act IV Scene 4

*Enter Hamlet, Rosencrantz, Guildenstern,
and others.*

Ham. Good sir, whose powers are these ?

Cap. They are of Norway, sir.

Ham. How purpos'd, sir, I pray you ?

Cap. Against some part of Poland.

Ham. Who commands them, sir ?

Cap. The nephew to old Norway, Fortinbras.

Ham. Goes it against the main of Poland, sir,
Or for some frontier ?

Cap. Truly to speak, and with no addition,
We go to gain a little patch of ground
That hath in it no profit but the name.
To pay five ducats, five, I would not farm it ;
Nor will it yield to Norway or the Pole
A ranker rate, should it be sold in fee.

Ham. Why, then the Polack never will
defend it.

Cap. Yes, 'tis already garrison'd.

Ham. Two thousand souls and twenty
thousand ducats

Will not debate the question of this straw ;
This is the imposthume* of much wealth [abscess
and peace,

That inward breaks, and shows no cause without
Why the man dies.—I humbly thank you, sir.

Cap. God be wi' you, sir. [Exit.

Ros. Will 't please you go, my lord ?

Ham. I'll be with you straight. Go a little
before. [Revert all except Hamlet.

How all occasions do inform against me,
And spur my dull revenge ! What is a man,
If his chief good and market of his time
Be but to sleep and feed ? a beast, no more.
Sure, He that made us with such large discourse,
Looking before and after, gave us not

Hamlet

That capability and godlike reason [grow fusty]
To fust* in us unus'd. Now, whether it be
Bestial oblivion, or some craven scruple
Of thinking too precisely on the event,—
A thought which, quarter'd, hath but one part
wisdom

And ever three parts coward,—I do not know
Why yet I live to say 'This thing's to do,'
Sith I have cause and will and strength and means
To do't. Examples gross as earth exhort me;
Witness this army of such mass and charge,
Led by a delicate and tender prince,
Whose spirit with divine ambition puff'd
Makes mouths at the invisible event,
Exposing what is mortal and unsure
To all that fortune, death, and danger dare,
Even for an egg-shell. Rightly to be great
Is not to stir without great argument,
But greatly to find quarrel in a straw
When honour's at the stake. How stand I then,
That have a father kill'd, a mother stain'd,
Excitements of my reason and my blood,
And let all sleep, while to my shame I see
The imminent death of twenty thousand men,
That for a fantasy and trick of fame
Go to their graves like beds, fight for a plot
Whereon the numbers cannot try the cause,
Which is not tomb enough and continent
To hide the slain? O, from this time forth,
My thoughts be bloody, or be nothing worth!
[Exit.]

SCENE 5.—Elsinore. A Room in the Castle.

Enter Queen, Horatio, and a Gentleman.

Queen. I will not speak with her.

Gent. She is importunate, indeed distract;

Act IV Scene 5

Her mood will needs be pitied.

Queen. What would she have?

Gent. She speaks much of her father; says
she hears

There's tricks i' the world; and hems, and beats
her heart;

Spurns enviously at straws; speaks things in
doubt,

That carry but half sense: her speech is nothing,
Yet the unshaped use of it doth move

The hearers to collection*; they aim at it, [conjecture
And botch the words up fit to their own
thoughts;

Which, as her winks and nods and gestures
yield them,

Indeed would make one think there might be
thought,

Though nothing sure, yet much unhappily.

Hor. 'Twere good she were spoken with, for
she may strew

Dangerous conjectures in ill-breeding minds.

Queen. Let her come in. [Exit Horatio.

[Aside] To my sick soul, as sin's true nature is,
Each toy seems prologue to some great amiss;
So full of artless jealousy is guilt,
It spills itself in fearing to be spilt.

Re-enter Horatio, with Ophelia.

Oph. Where is the beauteous majesty of Denmark?

Queen. How now, Ophelia!

Oph. [Sings]

How should I your true love know

From another one?

By his cockle hat and staff,

And his sandal shoon.

Hamlet

Queen. Alas, sweet lady, what imports this song?

Oph. Say you? nay, pray you, mark.

[Sings] *He is dead and gone, lady,
He is dead and gone;
At his head a grass-green turf,
At his heels a stone.*

Queen. Nay, but, Ophelia,—

Oph. Pray you, mark.

[Sings] *White his shroud as the mountain
snow,—*

Enter King.

Queen. Alas, look here, my lord.

Oph. [Sings] *Larded with sweet flowers;
Which bewept to the grave did go
With true-love showers.*

King. How do you, pretty lady?

Oph. Well, God 'ield* you! They [yield, reward] say the owl was a baker's daughter. Lord, we know what we are, but know not what we may be. God be at your table!

King. [Aside] Conceit upon her father.

Oph. Pray you, let's have no words of this; but when they ask you what it means, say you this:

[Sings] *To-morrow is Saint Valentine's day,
All in the morning betime,
And I a maid at your window,
To be your Valentine.
Then up he rose, and donn'd his clothes,
And dupp'd the chamber door;
Let in the maid, that out a maid
Never departed more.*

King. Pretty Ophelia!

Act IV Scene 5

Oph. Indeed, la, without an oath, I'll make an end on't.

[Sings] *By Gis and by Saint Charity,*

Alack, and fie for shame!

Young men will do't, if they come to't;

By cock, they are to blame.

Quoth she, before you tumbled me,

You promised me to wed.

So would I ha' done, by yonder sun,

An thou hadst not come to my bed.

King. How long hath she been thus?

Oph. I hope all will be well. We must be patient; but I cannot choose but weep, to think they should lay him i' the cold ground. My brother shall know of it; and so I thank you for your good counsel.—Come, my coach!—Good night, ladies; good night, sweet ladies; good night, good night. [Exit.]

King. Follow her close; give her good watch,

I pray you.

[Exit Horatio.]

O, this is the poison of deep grief; it springs
All from her father's death. O Gertrude, Gertrude,

When sorrows come, they come not single spies,
But in battalions. First, her father slain;
Next, your son gone; and he most violent author
Of his own just remove: the people muddied,
Thick and unwholesome in their thoughts and
whispers,

For good Polonius' death; and we have done
but greenly,

In hugger-mugger to inter him: poor Ophelia
Divided from herself and her fair judgment,
Without the which we are pictures, or mere
beasts:

Last, and as much containing as all these,

Hamlet

Her brother is in secret come from France,
Feeds on his wonder, keeps himself in clouds,
And wants not buzzers* to infect his ear [whisperers]
With pestilent speeches of his father's death ;
Wherein necessity, of matter beggar'd,
Will nothing stick our person to arraign
In ear and ear. O my dear Gertrude, this,
Like to a murdering-piece, in many places
Gives me superfluous death. *[A noise within.*

Queen. Alack, what noise is this ?

King. Where are my Switzers ? Let them
guard the door.

Enter another Gentleman.

What is the matter ?

Gent. Save yourself, my lord ;
The ocean, overpeering of his list,*

[rising above its boundary]

Eats not the flats with more impetuous haste
Than young Laertes. in a riotous head,
O'erbears your officers. The rabble call him lord ;
And, as the world were now but to begin,
Antiquity forgot, custom not known,
The ratifiers and props of every word,
They cry 'Choose we : Laertes shall be king !'
Caps, hands, and tongues, applaud it to the
clouds,

'Laertes shall be king, Laertes king !'

Queen. How cheerfully on the false trail they
cry !

O, this is counter, you false Danish dogs !

King. The doors are broke. *[Noise within.*

Enter Laertes, armed ; Danes following.

Laer. Where is this king ?—Sirs, stand you
all without.

Act IV Scene 5

Danes. No, let's come in.

Laer. I pray you, give me leave.

Danes. We will, we will.

[They retire without the door.]

Laer. I thank you : keep the door.—O thou
vile king,

Give me my father !

Queen. Calmly, good Laertes.

Laer. That drop of blood that's calm proclaims
me bastard,

Cries cuckold to my father, brands the harlot
Even here, between the chaste unsmirched brows
Of my true mother.

King. What is the cause, Laertes,
That thy rebellion looks so giant-like?—

Let him go, Gertrude ; do not fear our person :

There's such divinity doth hedge a king,

That treason can but peep to what it would,

Acts little of his will.—Tell me, Laertes,

Why thou art thus incens'd.—Let him go,
Gertrude.—

Speak, man.

Laer. Where is my father?

King. Dead.

Queen. But not by him.

King. Let him demand his fill.

Laer. How came he dead? I'll not be juggled
with :

To hell, allegiance ! vows, to the blackest devil !

Conscience and grace, to the profoundest pit !

I dare damnation. To this point I stand :

That both the worlds I give to negligence,

Let come what comes ; only I'll be reveng'd

Most thoroughly for my father.

King. Who shall stay you?

Laer. My will, not all the world ;

Hamlet

And for my means, I'll husband them so well,
They shall go far with little.

King. Good Laertes,
If you desire to know the certainty
Of your dear father's death, is't writ in your
revenge,
That, swoopstake, you will draw both friend
and foe,

Winner and loser?

Laer. None but his enemies.

King. Will you know them then?

Laer. To his good friends thus wide I'll ope
my arms;
And like the kind life-rendering pelican,
Repast them with my blood.

King. Why, now you speak
Like a good child and a true gentleman.
That I am guiltless of your father's death,
And am most sensibly in grief for it,
It shall as level to your judgment pierce
As day does to your eye.

Danes. [Within] Let her come in.

Laer. How now! what noise is that?

Re-enter Ophelia.

O heat, dry up my brains! tears seven times
salt,

Burn out the sense and virtue of mine eye!—
By heaven, thy madness shall be paid by weight,
Till our scale turn the beam. O rose of May!
Dear maid, kind sister, sweet Ophelia!—
O heavens! is't possible, a young maid's wits
Should be as mortal as an old man's life?
Nature is fine in love, and where 'tis fine
It sends some precious instance of itself
After the thing it loves.

Act IV Scene 5

Oph. [Sings]

*They bore him barefac'd on the bier ;
Hey non nonny, nonny, hey nonny ;
And on his grave rains many a tear.—*

Fare you well, my dove !

Laer. Hadst thou thy wits, and didst persuade
revenge,
It could not move thus.

Oph. *You must sing a-down, a-down,
An you call him a-down-a.*

O, how the wheel* becomes [how well the burden of the song
it ! It is the false steward, that stole his master's
daughter.

Laer. This nothing's more than matter.

Oph. There's rosemary, that's for remembrance ; pray you, love, remember : and there is pansies, that's for thoughts.

Laer. A document in madness, thoughts and remembrance fitted.

Oph. There's fennel for you, and columbines ; there's rue for you ; and here's some for me ; we may call it herb-grace o' Sundays ; O, you must wear your rue with a difference. There's a daisy : I would give you some violets, but they withered all when my father died ; they say he made a good end,—

[Sings] *For bonny sweet Robin is all my joy.*

Laer. Thought and affliction, passion, hell
itself,

She turns to favour and to prettiness.

Oph. [Sings]

*And will he not come again ?
And will he not come again ?
No, no, he is dead ;
Go to thy death-bed,
He never will come again.*

Hamlet

*His beard was white as snow,
All flaxen was his poll ;
He is gone, he is gone,
And we cast away moan :
God ha' mercy on his soul !*

And of all Christian souls, I pray God.—God be
wi' ye. [Exit.]

Laer. Do you see this, O God ?

King. Laertes, I must commune with your
grief,

Or you deny me right. Go but apart,
Make choice of whom your wisest friends you will,
And they shall hear and judge 'twixt you and me.
If by direct or by collateral hand
They find us touch'd, we will our kingdom give,
Our crown, our life, and all that we call ours,
To you in satisfaction ; but if not,
Be you content to lend your patience to us,
And we shall jointly labour with your soul
To give it due content.

Laer. Let this be so ;
His means of death, his obscure burial—
No trophy, sword, nor hatchment o'er his bones,
No noble rite nor formal ostentation—
Cry to be heard, as 'twere from heaven to earth,
That I must call't in question.

King. So you shall ;
And where the offence is let the great axe fall.
I pray you, go with me. [Exeunt.]

SCENE 6.—Another Room in the Castle.

Enter Horatio and a Servant.

Hor. What are they that would speak with me ?

Serv. Sailors, sir ; they say they have letters
for you.

Act IV Scene 6

Hor. Let them come in. [Exit Servant.
I do not know from what part of the world
I should be greeted, if not from Lord Hamlet.

Enter Sailors.

1st Sail. God bless you, sir,

Hor. Let him bless thee too.

1st Sail. He shall, sir, an't please him. There's a letter for you, sir—it comes from the ambassador that was bound for England—if your name be Horatio, as I am let to know it is.

Hor. [Reads] '*Horatio, when thou shalt have overlooked this, give these fellows some means to the king; they have letters for him. Ere we were two days old at sea, a pirate of very warlike appointment gave us chase. Finding ourselves too slow of sail, we put on a compelled valour; in the grapple I boarded them: on the instant they got clear of our ship; so I alone became their prisoner. They have dealt with me like thieves of mercy; but they knew what they did; I am to do a good turn for them. Let the king have the letters I have sent; and repair thou to me with as much speed as thou wouldst fly death. I have words to speak in thine ear will make thee dumb; yet are they much too light for the bore of the matter. These good fellows will bring thee where I am. Rosenkrantz and Guildenstern hold their course for England; of them I have much to tell thee. Farewell. He that thou knowest thine, HAMLET.*'
Come, I will make you way for these your letters; And do't the speedier, that you may direct me To him from whom you brought them. [Exeunt.

Hamlet

SCENE 7.—Another Room in the Castle.

Enter King and Laertes.

King. Now must your conscience my acquit-
tance seal,
And you must put me in your heart for friend,
Sith you have heard, and with a knowing ear,
That he which hath your noble father slain
Pursued my life.

Laer. It well appears ; but tell me
Why you proceeded not against these feats,
So crimeful and so capital in nature,
As by your safety, wisdom, all things else,
You mainly were stirr'd up.

King. O, for two special reasons,
Which may to you perhaps seem much un-
sinew'd,

But yet to me they are strong. The queen his
mother

Lives almost by his looks ; and for myself—
My virtue or my plague, be it either which—
She's so conjunctive to my life and soul,
That, as the star moves not but in his sphere,
I could not but by her. The other motive,
Why to a public count I might not go,
Is the great love the general gender* [the common people
bear him ;

Who, dipping all his faults in their affection,
Would, like the spring that turneth wood to
stone,

[fettens

Convert his gyves* to graces : so that my arrows,
Too slightly timber'd for so loud a wind,
Would have reverted to my bow again,
And not where I had aim'd them.

Laer. And so have I a noble father lost ;
A sister driven into desperate terms,

Act IV Scene 7

Whose worth, if praises may go back again,
Stood challenger on mount of all the age
For her perfections : but my revenge will come.

King. Break not your sleeps for that ; you
must not think

That we are made of stuff so flat and dull
That we can let our beard be shook with danger,
And think it pastime. You shortly shall hear
more :

I lov'd your father, and we love ourself ;
And that, I hope, will teach you to imagine—

Enter a Messenger.

How now ! what news ?

Mess. Letters, my lord, from Hamlet :
This to your majesty ; this to the queen.

King. From Hamlet ! who brought them ?

Mess. Sailors, my lord, they say ; I saw them
not :

They were given to me by Claudio ; he receiv'd
them

Of him that brought them.

King. Laertes, you shall hear them.—
Leave us. *[Exit Messenger.]*

[Reads] '*High and mighty, You shall know
I am set naked on your kingdom. To-morrow
shall I beg leave to see your kingly eyes ; when
I shall, first asking your pardon thereunto,
recount the occasion of my sudden and more
strange return.*

HAMLET.'

What should this mean ? Are all the rest come
back ?

Or is it some abuse, and no such thing ?

Laer. Know you the hand ? *[handwriting]*

King. 'Tis Hamlet's character.* 'Naked!'
And in a postscript here, he says 'alone.'

Hamlet

Can you advise me?

Laer. I'm lost in it, my lord. But let him come;
It warms the very sickness in my heart,
That I shall live and tell him to his teeth,
'Thus didest thou.'

King. If it be so, Laertes—
As how should it be so? how otherwise?—
Will you be rul'd by me?

Laer. Ay, my lord;
So you will not o'errule me to a peace.

King. To thine own peace. If he be now
return'd,
As checking at his voyage, and that he means
No more to undertake it, I will work him
To an exploit now ripe in my device,
Under the which he shall not choose but fall;
And for his death no wind of blame shall breathe,
But even his mother shall uncharge the practice*
And call it accident. [acquit of blame]

Laer. My lord, I will be rul'd;
The rather, if you could devise it so
That I might be the organ.

King. It falls right.
You have been talk'd of since your travel much,
And that in Hamlet's hearing, for a quality
Wherein, they say, you shine; your sum of parts
Did not together pluck such envy from him
As did that one, and that, in my regard,
Of the unworthiest siege.* [seat, rank]

Laer. What part is that, my lord?

King. A very riband in the cap of youth,
Yet needful too; for youth no less becomes
The light and careless livery that it wears
Than settled age his sables and his weeds,
Importing health* and graveness. Two [prosperity]
months since,

Act IV Scene 7

Here was a gentleman of Normandy :—

I've seen myself, and serv'd against, the French,
And they can well on horseback ; but this gallant
Had witchcraft in 't : he grew into his seat,
And to such wondrous doing brought his horse,
As he had been incorps'd* and demi- [incorporated
natur'd

With the brave beast. So far he topp'd my
thought

That I, in forgery of shapes and tricks,
Come short of what he did.

Laer. A Norman was 't?

King. A Norman.

Laer. Upon my life, Lamond.

King. The very same.

Laer. I know him well; he is the brooch
indeed

And gem of all the nation.

King. He made confession of you,
And gave you such a masterly report
For art and exercise in your defence,
And for your rapier most especially,
That he cried out, 'twould be a sight indeed,
If one could match you ; the scrimers* of [fencers
their nation,

He swore, had neither motion, guard, nor eye,
If you oppos'd them. Sir, this report of his
Did Hamlet so envenom with his envy
That he could nothing do but wish and beg
Your sudden coming o'er, to play with him.
Now, out of this—

Laer. What out of this, my lord?

King. Laertes, was your father dear to you?
Or are you like the painting of a sorrow,
A face without a heart?

Laer. Why ask you this?

Hamlet

King. Not that I think you did not love your father ;

But that I know love is begun by time,
And that I see, in passages of proof,
Time qualifies the spark and fire of it.
There lives within the very flame of love
A kind of wick or snuff that will abate it ;
And nothing is at a like goodness still,
For goodness, growing to a plurisy,* [an excess]
Dies in his own too-much. That we would do,
We should do when we would ; for this 'would'
changes

And hath abatements and delays as many
As there are tongues, are hands, are accidents ;
And then this 'should' is like a spendthrift
sigh,

That hurts by easing. But, to the quick o' the
ulcer :

Hamlet comes back ; what would you undertake,
To show yourself your father's son in deed
More than in words ?

Laer. To cut his throat i' the church.

King. No place, indeed, should murder
sanctuarize ;

Revenge should have no bounds. But, good
Laertes,

Will you do this, keep close within your chamber.
Hamlet return'd shall know you are come home :
We'll put on those shall praise your excellence
And set a double varnish on the fame
The Frenchman gave you ; bring you, in fine,
together

And wager on your heads. He, being remiss,
Most generous and free from all contriving,
Will not peruse the foils ; so that, with ease
Or with a little shuffling, you may choose

Act IV Scene 7

A sword unbated,* and in a pass of [unblunted
practice* [treacherous thrust

Requite him for your father.

Laer.

I will do't;

And, for that purpose, I'll anoint my sword.
I bought an unction of a mountebank,
So mortal that, but dip a knife in it,
Where it draws blood no cataplasm so rare,
Collected from all simples that have virtue
Under the moon, can save the thing from death
That is but scratch'd withal; I'll touch my
point

With this contagion, that, if I gall him slightly,
It may be death.

King.

Let's further think of this;

Weigh what convenience both of time and means
May fit us to our shape. If this should fail,
And that our drift look through our bad per-
formance,

'Twere better not assay'd; therefore this project
Should have a back or second, that might hold
If this should blast in proof.* Soft!— [burst in the trial
let me see:—

We'll make a solemn wager on your cunnings,—
I ha't:

When in your motion you are hot and dry—
As make your bouts more violent to that end—
And that he calls for drink, I'll have prepar'd him
A chalice for the nonce, whereon but sipping,
If he by chance escape your venom'd stuck,*
Our purpose may hold there. [thrust

Enter Queen.

How now, sweet queen!

Queen. One woe doth tread upon another's
heel,

Hamlet

So fast they follow. Your sister's drown'd,
Laertes.

Laer. Drown'd! O, where?

Queen. There is a willow grows aslant a brook,
That shows his hoar leaves in the glassy stream;
There with fantastic garlands did she come
Of crow-flowers,* nettles, daisies, and [^{? crowfoot}
long purples,

That liberal shepherds give a grosser name,
But our cold maids do dead men's fingers call
them:

There, on the pendent boughs her coronet weeds
Clambering to hang, an envious sliver* [^{branch}
broke,

When down her weedy trophies and herself
Fell in the weeping brook. Her clothes spread
wide,

And, mermaid-like, a while they bore her up;
Which time she chanted snatches of old tunes,
As one incapable of her own distress,
Or like a creature native and indued
Unto that element: but long it could not be
Till that her garments, heavy with their drink,
Pull'd the poor wretch from her melodious lay
To muddy death.

Laer. Alas, then, she is drown'd?

Queen. Drown'd, drown'd.

Laer. Too much of water hast thou, poor
Ophelia,

And therefore I forbid my tears. But yet
It is our trick; nature her custom holds,
Let shame say what it will: when these are gone,
The woman will be out.—Adieu, my lord;
I have a speech of fire, that fain would blaze,
But that this folly douts it. [*Exit.*

King. Let's follow, Gertrude;

Act V Scene 1

How much I had to do to calm his rage!
Now fear I this will give it start again;
Therefore let 's follow. [*Exeunt.*]

ACT V.

SCENE 1.—A Churchyard.

Enter two Clowns, with spades, etc.

1st Clo. Is she to be buried in Christian burial that wilfully seeks her own salvation?

2nd Clo. I tell thee she is; and therefore make her grave straight*: the crowner hath sat ^{lat}at once on her, and finds it Christian burial.

1st Clo. How can that be, unless she drowned herself in her own defence?

2nd Clo. Why, 'tis found so.

1st Clo. It must be *se offendendo*; it cannot be else. For here lies the point: if I drown myself wittingly, it argues an act, and an act hath three branches; it is, to act, to do, and to perform: argal, she drowned herself wittingly.

2nd Clo. Nay, but hear you, goodman delver,—

1st Clo. Give me leave. Here lies the water; good: here stands the man; good: if the man go to this water, and drown himself, it is, will he nill he, he goes,—mark you that; but if the water come to him and drown him, he drowns not himself: argal, he that is not guilty of his own death shortens not his own life.

2nd Clo. But is this law?

1st Clo. Ay, marry, is't; crowner's quest law.

2nd Clo. Will you ha' the truth on't? If this had not been a gentlewoman, she should have been buried out o' Christian burial.

1st Clo. Why, there thou say'st; and the more

Hamlet

pity that great folk should have countenance in this world to drown or hang themselves, more than their even-Christian.—Come, my spade. There is no ancient gentlemen but gardeners, ditchers, and grave-makers; they hold up Adam's profession.

2nd Clo. Was he a gentleman?

1st Clo. He was the first that ever bore arms.

2nd Clo. Why, he had none.

1st Clo. What, art a heathen? How dost thou understand the Scripture? The Scripture says 'Adam digged;' could he dig without arms? I'll put another question to thee; if thou answerest me not to the purpose, confess thyself—

2nd Clo. Go to.

1st Clo. What is he that builds stronger than either the mason, the shipwright, or the carpenter?

2nd Clo. The gallows-maker; for that frame outlives a thousand tenants.

1st Clo. I like thy wit well, in good faith: the gallows does well; but how does it well? it does well to those that do ill; now thou dost ill to say the gallows is built stronger than the church: argal, the gallows may do well to thee. To't again, come.

2nd Clo. Who builds stronger than a mason, a shipwright, or a carpenter?

1st Clo. Ay, tell me that, and unyoke.

2nd Clo. Marry, now I can tell.

1st Clo. To't.

2nd Clo. Mass, I cannot tell.

Enter Hamlet and Horatio, at a distance.

1st Clo. Cudgel thy brains no more about it, for your dull ass will not mend his pace with

Act V Scene 1

beating ; and when you are asked this question next, say 'a grave-maker : ' the houses that he makes last till doomsday. Go, get thee to Yaughan ; fetch me a stoup of liquor.

[Exit 2nd Clown.

[He digs, and sings.

In youth, when I did love, did love,

Methought it was very sweet,

To contract, O! the time, for, ah! my behove,

O, methought, there was nothing meet.

Ham. Has this fellow no feeling of his business, that he sings at grave-making?

Hor. Custom hath made it in him a property of easiness.

Ham. 'Tis e'en so ; the hand of little employment hath the daintier sense.

1st Clo. [Sings]

But age, with his stealing steps,

Hath claw'd me in his clutch,

And hath shipped me intil the land,

As if I had never been such.

[Throws up a skull.

Ham. That skull had a tongue in it, and could sing once ; how the knave jowls it to the ground, as if it were Cain's jaw-bone, that did the first murder ! It might be the pate of a politician, which this ass now o'er-reaches ; one that would circumvent God, might it not ?

Hor. It might, my lord.

Ham. Or of a courtier, which could say 'Good morrow, sweet lord ! How dost thou, good lord ? ' This might be my lord such-a-one, that praised my lord such-a-one's horse, when he meant to beg it, might it not ?

Hor. Ay, my lord.

Ham. Why, e'en so ; and now my Lady

Hamlet

Worm's, chapless, and knocked about the mazzard* with a sexton's spade: here's [skull fine revolution, an we had the trick to see't. Did these bones cost no more the breeding, but to play at loggats* with 'em? mine ache to [bowls think on't.

1st Clo. [Sings]

*A pick-axe, and a spude, a spade,
For and a shrouding sheet;
O, a pit of clay for to be made
For such a guest is meet.*

[Throws up another skull.]

Ham. There's another; why may not that be the skull of a lawyer? Where be his quiddits* now, his quillets,* his cases, his [subtleties and quibbles tenures, and his tricks? why does he suffer this rude knave now to knock him about the sconce* with a dirty shovel, and will not tell him [head of his action of battery? Hum! This fellow might be in's time a great buyer of land, with his statutes, his recognizances, his fines, his double vouchers, his recoveries: is this the fine* of his fines, and the recovery of his [end recoveries, to have his fine pate full of fine dirt? will his vouchers vouch him no more of his purchases, and double ones too, than the length and breadth of a pair of indentures? The very conveyances of his lands will hardly lie in this box; and must the inheritor himself have no more, ha?

Hor. Not a jot more, my lord.

Ham. Is not parchment made of sheep-skins?

Hor. Ay, my lord, and of calf-skins too.

Ham. They are sheep and calves which seek out assurance in that. I will speak to this fellow. —Whose grave's this, sirrah?

Act V Scene 1

1st Clo. Mine, sir.—

[Sings] *O, a pit of clay for to be made
For such a guest is meet.*

Ham. I think it be thine, indeed, for thou liest in 't.

1st Clo. You lie out on 't, sir, and therefore it is not yours ; for my part, I do not lie in 't, and yet it is mine.

Ham. Thou dost lie in 't, to be in 't and say it is thine ; 'tis for the dead, not for the quick : therefore thou liest.

1st Clo. 'Tis a quick lie, sir ; 'twill away again, from me to you.

Ham. What man dost thou dig it for ?

1st Clo. For no man, sir.

Ham. What woman, then ?

1st Clo. For none, neither.

Ham. Who is to be buried in 't ?

1st Clo. One that was a woman, sir ; but, rest her soul, she 's dead.

Ham. How absolute the knave is ! we must speak by the card, or equivocation will undo us. By the Lord, Horatio, these three years I have taken a note of it ; the age is grown so picked that the toe of the peasant comes so near the heel of the courtier, he galls his kibe. *—[chill-blain] How long hast thou been a grave-maker ?

1st Clo. Of all the days i' the year, I came to 't that day that our last king Hamlet overcame Fortinbras.

Ham. How long is that since ?

1st Clo. Cannot you tell that ? every fool can tell that : it was the very day that young Hamlet was born ; he that is mad, and sent into England.

Ham. Ay, marry, why was he sent into England ?

Hamlet

1st Clo. Why, because he was mad: he shall recover his wits there; or, if he do not, it's no great matter there.

Ham. Why?

1st Clo. 'Twill not be seen in him there; there the men are as mad as he.

Ham. How came he mad?

1st Clo. Very strangely, they say.

Ham. How strangely?

1st Clo. Faith, e'en with losing his wits.

Ham. Upon what ground?

1st Clo. Why, here in Denmark; I have been sexton here, man and boy, thirty years.

Ham. How long will a man lie i' the earth ere he rot?

1st Clo. I' faith, if he be not rotten before he die—as we have many pocky corpses now-a-days, that will scarce hold the laying in—he will last you some eight year or nine year; a tanner will last you nine year.

Ham. Why he more than another?

1st Clo. Why, sir, his hide is so tanned with his trade, that he will keep out water a great while; and your water is a sore decayer of your whoreson dead body. Here's a skull now; this skull has lain in the earth three and twenty years.

Ham. Whose was it?

1st Clo. A whoreson mad fellow's it was; whose do you think it was?

Ham. Nay, I know not.

1st Clo. A pestilence on him for a mad rogue! a' poured a flagon of Rhenish on my head once. This same skull, sir, was Yorick's skull, the king's jester.

Ham. This?

1st Clo. E'en that.

Act V Scene 1

Ham. Let me see.—[*Takes the skull.*] Alas, poor Yorick!—I knew him, Horatio; a fellow of infinite jest, of most excellent fancy: he hath borne me on his back a thousand times; and now, how abhorred in my imagination it is! my gorge rises at it. Here hung those lips that I have kissed I know not how oft.—Where be your gibes now? your gambols? your songs? your flashes of merriment, that were wont to set the table on a roar? Not one now, to mock your own grinning? quite chap-fallen? Now get you to my lady's chamber, and tell her, let her paint an inch thick, to this favour* [*appearance* she must come; make her laugh at that.—Prithee, Horatio, tell me one thing.

Hor. What's that, my lord?

Ham. Dost thou think Alexander looked o' this fashion i' the earth?

Hor. E'en so.

Ham. And smelt so? pah! [*Puts down the skull.*

Hor. E'en so, my lord.

Ham. To what base uses we may return, Horatio! Why may not imagination trace the noble dust of Alexander, till he find it stopping a bung-hole?

Hor. 'Twere to consider too curiously, to consider so.

Ham. No, faith, not a jot; but to follow him thither with modesty enough, and likelihood to lead it; as thus: Alexander died, Alexander was buried, Alexander returneth into dust; the dust is earth; of earth we make loam; and why of that loam, whereto he was converted, might they not stop a beer-barrel?

Imperious Cæsar, dead and turn'd to clay,
Might stop a hole to keep the wind away;

Hamlet

O, that that earth, which kept the world in awe,
Should patch a wall to expel the winter's flaw!
But soft! soft! aside! here comes the king.

*Enter Priests, etc., in procession; the Corpse of
Ophelia, Laertes, and Mourners following;
King, Queen, their trains, etc.*

The queen, the courtiers; who is that they
follow?

And with such maimed rites? This doth betoken
The corse they follow did with desperate hand
Fordo* it own life; 'twas of some estate. [undo
Couch we awhile, and mark.

[Retiring with Horatio.]

Laer. What ceremony else?

Ham. That is Laertes, a very noble youth;
mark.

Laer. What ceremony else?

1st Priest. Her obsequies have been as far
enlarg'd

As we have warranty: her death was doubtful;
And, but that great command o'ersways the
order,

She should in ground unsanctified have lodg'd
Till the last trumpet; for charitable prayers,
Shards, flints, and pebbles should be thrown
on her:

Yet here she is allow'd her virgin crants,* [garlands
Her maiden strewments, and the bringing home
Of bell and burial.

Laer. Must there no more be done?

1st Priest. No more be done;

We should profane the service of the dead
To sing a requiem and such rest to her
As to peace-parted souls.

Laer. Lay her i' the earth;—

Act V Scene 1

And from her fair and unpolluted flesh
May violets spring !—I tell thee, churlish priest,
A ministering angel shall my sister be,
When thou liest howling.

Ham. What, the fair Ophelia !

Queen. Sweets to the sweet ; farewell !

[Scattering flowers.]

I hop'd thou shouldst have been my Hamlet's
wife ;

I thought thy bride-bed to have deck'd, sweet
maid,

And not t' have strew'd thy grave.

Laer. O, treble woe

Fall ten times treble on that cursed head

Whose wicked deed thy most ingenious sense

Depriv'd thee of !—Hold off the earth awhile,

Till I have caught her once more in mine arms.

[Leaps into the grave.]

Now pile your dust upon the quick and dead,

Till of this flat a mountain you have made

To o'ertop old Pelion or the skyish head

Of blue Olympus.

Ham. *[Advancing]* What is he whose grief
Bears such an emphasis ? whose phrase of sorrow
Conjures the wandering stars, and makes them
stand

Like wonder-wounded hearers ? This is I,

Hamlet the Dane ! *[Leaps into the grave.]*

Laer. The devil take thy soul !

[Grappling with him.]

Ham. Thou pray'st not well.

I prithee, take thy fingers from my throat ;

For, though I am not splenitive and rash,

Yet have I something in me dangerous,

Which let thy wisdom fear. Hold off thy hand !

King. Pluck them asunder.

Hamlet

Queen.

Hamlet, Hamlet!

All. Gentlemen,—

Hor.

Good my lord, be quiet.

[*The Attendants part them, and
they come out of the grave.*]

Ham. Why, I will fight with him upon this
theme

Until my eyelids will no longer wag.

Queen. O my son, what theme?

Ham. I lov'd Ophelia; forty thousand brothers
Could not, with all their quantity of love,
Make up my sum.—What wilt thou do for her?

King. O, he is mad, Laertes.

Queen. For love of God, forbear him.

Ham. 'Swounds, show me what thou'lt do :
Woo't weep? woo't fight? woo't fast? woo't
tear thyself?

Woo't drink up eisel*? eat a crocodile? [*vinegar*]
I'll do't. Dost thou come here to whine?
To outface me with leaping in her grave?
Be buried quick with her, and so will I;
And, if thou prate of mountains, let them
throw

Millions of acres on us, till our ground,
Singeing his pate against the burning zone,
Make Ossa like a wart! Nay, an thou'lt mouth,
I'll rant as well as thou.

Queen.

This is mere madness:

And thus awhile the fit will work on him;
Anon, as patient as the female dove,
When that her golden couplets are disclos'd,
His silence will sit drooping.

Ham.

Hear you, sir;

What is the reason that you use me thus?
I lov'd you ever.—But it is no matter;
Let Hercules himself do what he may,

Act V Scene 2

The cat will mew, and dog will have his day.

[*Exit.*

King. I pray you, good Horatio, wait upon him.

[*Exit Horatio.*

[*To Laertes*] Strengthen your patience in our last night's speech ;

We'll put the matter to the present push.—

Good Gertrude, set some watch over your son.

This grave shall have a living monument :

An hour of quiet shortly shall we see ;

Till then, in patience our proceeding be.

[*Exeunt.*

SCENE 2.—A Hall in the Castle.

Enter Hamlet and Horatio.

Ham. So much for this, sir ; now let me see the other ;

You do remember all the circumstance ?

Hor. Remember it, my lord !

Ham. Sir, in my heart there was a kind of fighting

That would not let me sleep ; methought I lay

Worse than the mutines in the bilboes.* [in iron

Rashly,—

And prais'd be rashness for it, let us know,

Our indiscretion sometimes serves us well,

When our deep plots do fail ; and that should teach us

There's a divinity that shapes our ends,

Rough-hew them how we will,—

Hor.

That is most certain.

Ham. Up from my cabin,

My sea-gown scarf'd about me, in the dark

Grop'd I to find out them ; had my desire,

Finger'd their packet, and in fine withdrew

Hamlet

To mine own room again ; making so bold,
My fears forgetting manners, to unseal
Their grand commission ; where I found,
Horatio,—

O royal knavery !—an exact command,
Larded with many several sorts of reasons
Importing Denmark's health and England's too,
With, ho ! such bugs* and goblins in my [bugbears
life,

That, on the supervise, no leisure bated,
No, not to stay the grinding of the axe,
My head should be struck off.

Hor. Is 't possible ?

Ham. Here's the commission ; read it at more
leisure.

But wilt thou hear me how I did proceed ?

Hor. I beseech you.

Ham. Being thus be-netted round with vil-
lanies—

Ere I could make a prologue to my brains,
They had begun the play—I sat me down,
Devis'd a new commission, wrote it fair ;
I once did hold it, as our statists do,
A baseness to write fair, and labour'd much
How to forget that learning, but, sir, now
It did me yeoman's service. Wilt thou know
The effect of what I wrote ?

Hor. Ay, good my lord.

Ham. An earnest conjuration from the king.
As England was his faithful tributary,
As love between them like the palm might
flourish,

As peace should still her wheaten garland wear
And stand a comma 'tween their amities,
And many such-like 'as's' of great charge,
That, on the view and knowing of these contents,

Act V Scene 2

Without debatement further, more or less,
He should the bearers put to sudden death,
Not shriving-time allow'd.

Hor. How was this seal'd?

Ham. Why, even in that was heaven ordinant.
I had my father's signet in my purse,
Which was the model of that Danish seal;
Folded the writ up in form of the other,
Subscrib'd it, gave't the impression, plac'd it
safely,
The changeling never known. Now, the next day
Was our sea-fight; and what to this was sequent
Thou know'st already.

Hor. So Guildenstern and Rosencrantz go to't.

Ham. Why, man, they did make love to this
employment:

They are not near my conscience; their defeat
Does by their own insinuation grow.
'Tis dangerous when the baser nature comes
Between the pass and fell incensed points
Of mighty opposites.

Hor. Why, what a king is this!

Ham. Does it not, think'st thee, stand me
now upon—

He that hath kill'd my king and whor'd my
mother,

Popp'd in between the election and my hopes,
Thrown out his angle for my proper life,
And with such cozenage—is't not perfect con-
science,

To quit him with this arm? and is't not to be
damn'd,

To let this canker of our nature come
In further evil?

Hor. It must be shortly known to him from
England

Hamlet

What is the issue of the business there.

Ham. It will be short : the interim is mine ;
And a man's life 's no more than to say 'One.'
But I am very sorry, good Horatio,
That to Laertes I forgot myself ;
For, by the image of my cause,* [i.e. my father's death
I see

The portraiture of his. I'll court his favours ;
But, sure, the bravery of his grief did put me
Into a towering passion.

Hor. Peace ! who comes here ?

Enter Osrice.

Osr. Your lordship is right welcome back to Denmark.

Ham. I humbly thank you, sir. [*Aside to Horatio*] Dost know this water-fly ?

Hor. [*Aside to Hamlet*] No, my good lord.

Ham. [*Aside to Horatio*] Thy state is the more gracious ; for 'tis a vice to know him. He hath much land, and fertile ; let a beast be lord of beasts, and his crib shall stand at the king's mess. 'Tis a chough, but, as I say, spacious in the possession of dirt.

Osr. Sweet lord, if your lordship were at leisure, I should impart a thing to you from his majesty.

Ham. I will receive it, sir, with all diligence of spirit. Put your bonnet to his right use ; 'tis for the head.

Osr. I thank your lordship, it is very hot.

Ham. No, believe me, 'tis very cold ; the wind is northerly.

Osr. It is indifferent cold, my lord, indeed.

Ham. But yet methinks it is very sultry and hot for my complexion.

Act V Scene 2

Osr. Exceedingly, my lord; it is very sultry, —as 'twere,—I cannot tell how. But, my lord, his majesty bade me signify to you that he has laid a great wager on your head. Sir, this is the matter,—

Ham. I beseech you, remember—

[Hamlet moves him to put on his hat.]

Osr. Nay, in good faith: for mine ease, in good faith. Sir, here is newly come to court Laertes; believe me, an absolute gentleman, full of most excellent differences,* of [distinctions] very soft society and great showing: indeed, to speak feelingly of him, he is the card or calendar of gentry,* for you shall find in [courtesy] him the continent of what part a gentleman would see.

Ham. Sir, his definement suffers no perdition in you; though, I know, to divide him inventorially would dizzy the arithmetic of memory, and yet but yaw* neither, in respect of his quick [swerve] sail. But, in the verity of extolment, I take him to be a soul of great article, and his infusion of such dearth and rareness, as, to make true diction of him, his semblable is his mirror, and who else would trace him, his umbrage, nothing more.

Osr. Your lordship speaks most infallibly of him.

Ham. The concernancy, sir? why do we wrap the gentleman in our more rawer breath?

Osr. Sir?

Hor. Is t not possible to understand in another tongue? You will do t, sir, really.

Ham. What imports the nomination of this gentleman?

Osr. Of Laertes?

Hamlet

Hor. [*Aside to Hamlet*] His purse is empty already ; all's golden words are spent.

Ham. Of him, sir.

Osr. I know you are not ignorant—

Ham. I would you did, sir ; yet, in faith, if you did, it would not much approve me. Well, sir ?

Osr. You are not ignorant of what excellence Laertes is—

Ham. I dare not confess that, lest I should compare with him in excellence ; but, to know a man well, were to know himself.

Osr. I mean, sir, for his weapon ; but in the imputation laid on him by them, in his need he's unfellowed.

Ham. What's his weapon ?

Osr. Rapier and dagger.

Ham. That's two of his weapons ; but, well.

Osr. The king, sir, hath wagered with him six Barbary horses ; against the which he has imponed, as I take it, six French rapiers and poniards, with their assigns, as girdle, hangers, and so. Three of the carriages, in faith, are very dear to fancy, very responsive to the hilts, most delicate carriages, and of very liberal conceit.

Ham. What call you the carriages ?

Hor. [*Aside to Hamlet*] I knew you must be edified by the margent ere you had done.

Osr. The carriages, sir, are the hangers.

Ham. The phrase would be more germane to the matter, if we could carry cannon by our sides ; I would it might be hangers till then. But, on : six Barbary horses against six French swords, their assigns, and three liberal-conceited carriages ; that's the French bet against the Danish. Why is this 'imponed,' as you call it ?

Act V Scene 2

Osr. The king, sir, hath laid that in a dozen passes between yourself and him, he shall not exceed your three hits : he hath laid on twelve for nine ; and it would come to immediate trial, if your lordship would vouchsafe the answer.

Ham. How if I answer 'no?'

Osr. I mean, my lord, the opposition of your person in trial.

Ham. Sir, I will walk here in the hall : if it please his majesty, 'tis the breathing time of day with me ; let the foils be brought, the gentleman willing, and the king hold his purpose, I will win for him if I can ; if not, I will gain nothing but my shame and the odd hits.

Osr. Shall I re-deliver you e'en so ?

Ham. To this effect, sir, after what flourish your nature will.

Osr. I commend my duty to your lordship.

Ham. Yours, yours. [*Exit Osr.*] He does well to commend it himself ; there are no tongues else for's turn.

Hor. This lapwing runs away with the shell on his head.

Ham. He did comply with his dug, before he sucked it. Thus has he—and many more of the same bevy that I know the drossy age dotes on—only got the tune of the time and outward habit of encounter ; a kind of yesty collection, which carries them through and through the most foud and winnowed opinions ; and do but blow them to their trial, the bubbles are out.

Enter a Lord.

Lord. My lord, his majesty commended him

Hamlet

to you by young Osric, who brings back to him, that you attend him in the hall; he sends to know if your pleasure hold to play with Laertes, or that you will take longer time.

Ham. I am constant to my purposes; they follow the king's pleasure: if his fitness speaks, mine is ready; now or whensoever, provided I be so able as now.

Lord. The king and queen and all are coming down.

Ham. In happy time.

Lord. The queen desires you to use some gentle entertainment to Laertes before you fall to play.

Ham. She well instructs me. [Exit Lord.]

Hor. You will lose this wager, my lord.

Ham. I do not think so: since he went into France, I have been in continual practice; I shall win at the odds. But thou wouldst not think how ill all's here about my heart; but it is no matter.

Hor. Nay, good my lord,—

Ham. It is but foolery; but it is such a kind of gaingiving,* as would perhaps trouble [misgiving] a woman.

Hor. If your mind dislike any thing, obey it. I will forestall their repair hither, and say you are not fit.

Ham. Not a whit; we defy augury: there's a special providence in the fall of a sparrow. If it be now, 'tis not to come; if it be not to come, it will be now; if it be not now, yet it will come: the readiness is all. Since no man knows aught of what he leaves, what is't to leave betimes? Let be.

Act V Scene 2

Enter King, Queen, Laertes, Lords, Osric, and Attendants with foils, etc.

King. Come, Hamlet, come, and take this hand from me.

[The King puts Laertes's hand into Hamlet's.]

Ham. Give me your pardon, sir: I've done you wrong;

But pardon 't, as you are a gentleman.

This presence knows,

And you must needs have heard, how I am punish'd

With sore distraction. What I have done,
That might your nature, honour, and exception
Roughly awake, I here proclaim was madness.

Was't Hamlet wrong'd Laertes? Never Hamlet:
If Hamlet from himself be ta'en away,

And when he's not himself does wrong Laertes,
Then Hamlet does it not; Hamlet denies it.

Who does it, then? His madness: if 't be so,
Hamlet is of the faction that is wrong'd;

His madness is poor Hamlet's enemy.

Sir, in this audience,

Let my disclaiming from a purpos'd evil

Free me so far in your most generous thoughts,

That I have shot mine arrow o'er the house,

And hurt my brother.

Laer.

I am satisfied in nature,

Whose motive, in this case, should stir me most
To my revenge; but in my terms of honour

I stand aloof, and will no reconciliation

Till by some elder masters of known honour

I have a voice and precedent of peace,

To keep my name ungor'd. But till that time,

I do receive your offer'd love like love,

And will not wrong it.

Hamlet

Ham. I embrace it freely,
And will this brother's wager frankly play.—
Give us the foils.—Come on.

Laer. Come, one for me.

Ham. I'll be your foil, Laertes ; in mine
ignorance
Your skill shall, like a star i' the darkest night,
Stick fiery off indeed.

Laer. You mock me, sir.

Ham. No, by this hand.

King. Give them the foils, young Osric.—
Cousin Hamlet,
You know the wager?

Ham. Very well, my lord ;
Your grace hath laid the odds o' the weaker
side.

King. I do not fear it ; I have seen you both :
But since he is better'd, we have therefore odds.

Laer. This is too heavy, let me see another.

Ham. This likes me well. These foils have
all a length?

Os. Ay, my good lord. [*They prepare to play.*]

King. Set me the stoups of wine upon that
table.

If Hamlet give the first or second hit,
Or quit in answer of the third exchange,
Let all the battlements their ordnance fire :
The king shall drink to Hamlet's better breath ;
And in the cup an union* shall he throw, [a pearl
Richer than that which four successive kings
In Denmark's crown have worn. Give me the
cups ;

[kettle-drum]

And let the kettle* to the trumpet speak,
The trumpet to the cannoneer without,
The cannons to the heavens, the heavens to
earth,

Act V Scene 2

‘Now the king drinks to Hamlet!’—Come,
begin;—

And you, the judges, bear a wary eye.

Ham. Come on, sir.

Laer. Come, my lord. [*They play.*]

Ham. One.

Laer. No.

Ham. Judgment.

Osr. A hit, a very palpable hit.

Luer. Well; again.

King. Stay; give me drink.—Hamlet, this
pearl is thine;

Here’s to thy health.

[*Trumpets sound, and cannon shot off within.*]

Give him the cup.

Ham. I’ll play this bout first; set it by awhile.—
Come. [*They play.*] Another hit; what say you?

Laer. A touch, a touch, I do confess.

King. Our son shall win.

Queen. He’s fat and scant of breath.—
Here, Hamlet, take my napkin, rub thy brows;
The queen carouses to thy fortune, Hamlet.

Ham. Good madam,—

King. Gertrude, do not drink.

Queen. I will, my lord; I pray you, pardon me.

King. [*Aside*] It is the poison’d cup; it is too
late.

Ham. I dare not drink yet, madam; by and by.

Queen. Come, let me wipe thy face.

Luer. My lord, I’ll hit him now.

King. I do not think ’t.

Laer. [*Aside*] And yet ’tis almost ’gainst my
conscience.

Ham. Come, for the third, Laertes. You but
dally;

I pray you, pass with your best violence;

Hamlet

I am afeard you make a wanton of me.

Laer. Say you so? come on. [*They play.*]

Osr. Nothing, neither way.

Laer. Have at you now!

[*Laertes wounds Hamlet; then, in
scuffling, they change rapiers,
and Hamlet wounds Laertes.*]

King. Part them; they are incens'd.

Ham. Nay, come, again. [*The Queen falls.*]

Osr. Look to the queen there, ho!

Hor. They bleed on both sides.—How is it,
my lord?

Osr. How is 't, Laertes?

Laer. Why, as a woodcock to mine own
springe, Osric;

I am justly kill'd with mine own treachery.

Ham. How does the queen?

King. She swoons to see them bleed.

Queen. No, no, the drink, the drink,—O my
dear Hamlet,—

The drink, the drink!—I am poison'd. [*Dies.*]

Ham. O villany!—Ho! let the door be lock'd!

Treachery! Seek it out!

Laer. It is here, Hamlet. Hamlet, thou art
slain;

No medicine in the world can do thee good,

In thee there is not half an hour of life:

The treacherous instrument is in thy hand,

Unbated and envenom'd. The foul practice

Hath turn'd itself on me; lo, here I lie,

Never to rise again. Thy mother's poison'd;

I can no more,—the king—the king's to
blame.

Ham. The point envenom'd too!—

Then, venom, to thy work! [*Stabs the King.*]

All. Treason! treason!

Act V Scene 2

King. O, yet defend me, friends; I am but hurt.

Ham. Here, thou incestuous, murderous, damned Dane,
Drink off this potion! Is thy union here?
Follow my mother! [*King dies.*]

Laer. He is justly serv'd;
It is a poison temper'd by himself.—
Exchange forgiveness with me, noble Hamlet;
Mine and my father's death come not upon thee,
Nor thine on me! [*Dies.*]

Ham. Heaven make thee free of it! I follow thee.—

I am dead, Horatio.—Wretched queen, adieu!—
You that look pale and tremble at this chance,
That are but mutes or audience to this act,
Had I but time—as this fell sergeant, death,
Is strict in his arrest—O, I could tell you—
But let it be.—Horatio, I am dead;
Thou livest; report me and my cause alike
To the unsatisfied.

Hor. Never believe it;
I am more an antique Roman than a Dane:
Here's yet some liquor left.

Ham. As thou'rt a man,
Give me the cup: let go; by heaven, I'll
have't.—

O good Horatio, what a wounded name,
Things standing thus unknown, shall live behind
me!

If thou didst ever hold me in thy heart,
Absent thee from felicity awhile,
And in this harsh world draw thy breath in
pain,
To tell my story.

[*March afar off, and shot within.*]

Hamlet

What warlike noise is this ?

Osr. Young Fortinbras, with conquest come
from Poland,
To the ambassadors of England gives
This warlike volley.

Ham. O, I die, Horatio ;
The potent poison quite o'er-crows my spirit.
I cannot live to hear the news from England ;
But I do prophesy the election lights
On Fortinbras : he has my dying voice ;
So tell him, with the occurents,* more [circumstances
and less,

Which have solicited—the rest is silence. [*Dies.*

Hor. Now cracks a noble heart.—Good night,
sweet prince,

And flights of angels sing thee to thy rest !

Why does the drum come hither ?

[*March within.*

*Enter Fortinbras, the English Ambassadors,
and others.*

Fort. Where is this sight ?

Hor. What is it ye would see ?
If aught of woe or wonder, cease your search.

Fort. This quarry* cries on havoc.—[*File of dead*
O proud death,

What feast is toward in thine eternal cell,
That thou so many princes at a shot
So bloodily hast struck ?

1st Amb. The sight is dismal ;
And our affairs from England come too late :
The ears are senseless that should give us
hearing,

To tell him his commandment is fulfill'd,
That Rosencrantz and Guildenstern are dead.
Where should we have our thanks ?

Act V Scene 2

Hor. Not from his mouth,
Had it the ability of life to thank you ;
He never gave commandment for their death.
But since, so jump upon this bloody question,
You from the Polack wars, and you from
England,
Are here arriv'd, give order that these bodies
High on a stage be placed to the view ;
And let me speak to the yet unknowing world
How these things came about : so shall you hear
Of carnal, bloody, and unnatural acts,
Of accidental judgments, casual slaughters,
Of deaths put on by cunning and forc'd cause,
And, in this upshot, purposes mistook
Fallen on the inventors' heads. All this can I
Truly deliver.

Fort. Let us haste to hear it,
And call the noblest to the audience.
For me, with sorrow I embrace my fortune ;
I have some rights of memory in this kingdom,
Which now to claim my vantage doth invite
me.

Hor. Of that I shall have also cause to speak,
And from his mouth whose voice will draw on
more ;
But let this same be presently perform'd,
Even while men's minds are wild, lest more
mischance,
On plots and errors, happen.

Fort. Let four captains
Bear Hamlet, like a soldier, to the stage ;
For he was likely, had he been put on,
To have prov'd most royally : and, for his
passage,
The soldiers' music and the rites of war
Speak loudly for him.

Hamlet

Take up the bodies. Such a sight as this
Becomes the field, but here shows much amiss.
Go, bid the soldiers shoot.

*[A dead march. Exeunt, bearing off
the dead bodies ; after which a peal
of ordnance is shot off.]*

THE
TRAGEDY OF KING LEAR

DRAMATIS PERSONÆ.

LEAR, king of Britain.

KING OF FRANCE.

DUKE OF BURGUNDY.

DUKE OF CORNWALL.

DUKE OF ALBANY.

EARL OF KENT.

EARL OF GLOUCESTER.

EDGAR, son to Gloucester.

EDMUND, bastard son to Gloucester.

CURAN, a courtier.

Old Man, tenant to Gloucester.

Doctor.

Fool.

OSWALD, steward to Goneril.

A Captain employed by Edmund.

Gentleman attendant on Cordelia.

A Herald.

Servants to Cornwall.

GONERIL, }
REGAN, } daughters to Lear.
CORDELIA, }

Knights of Lear's train, Captains, Messengers, Soldiers,
and Attendants.

SCENE: Britain.

THE
TRAGEDY OF KING LEAR

ACT I.

SCENE 1.—King Lear's Palace.

Enter Kent, Gloucester, and Edmund.

Kent. I thought the king had more affected the Duke of Albany than Cornwall.

Glou. It did always seem so to us : but now, in the division of the kingdom, it appears not which of the dukes he values most ; for qualities are so weighed, that curiosity* in [scrutiny neither can make choice of either's moiety.

Kent. Is not this your son, my lord ?

Glou. His breeding, sir, hath been at my charge : I have so often blushed to acknowledge him, that now I am brazed* to it. [hardened

Kent. I cannot conceive you.

Glou. Sir, this young fellow's mother could ; whereupon she grew round-wombed, and had indeed, sir, a son for her cradle ere she had a husband for her bed. Do you smell a fault ?

Kent. I cannot wish the fault undone, the issue of it being so proper.* [comely

Glou. But I have, sir, a son by order of law, some year elder than this, who yet is no dearer in my account : though this knave came something saucily into the world before he was sent for, yet was his mother fair ; there was good sport at his making, and the whoreson must be

King Lear

acknowledged. Do you know this noble gentleman, Edmund?

Edm. No, my lord.

Glou. My lord of Kent: remember him hereafter as my honourable friend.

Edm. My services to your lordship.

Kent. I must love you, and sue to know you better.

Edm. Sir, I shall study deserving.

Glou. He hath been out* nine years, and [abroad away he shall again. The king is coming.

Sennet. Enter one bearing a coronet, King Lear, Cornwall, Albany, Goneril, Regan, Cordelia, and Attendants.

Lear. Attend the lords of France and Burgundy, Gloucester.

Glou. I shall, my liege.

[*Exeunt Gloucester and Edmund.*

Lear. Meantime we shall express our darker* purpose.

[more secret

Give me the map there. Know we have divided
In three our kingdom: and 'tis our fast intent
To shake all cares and business from our age;
Conferring them on younger strengths, while we
Unburthen'd crawl toward death. Our son of
Cornwall,

And you, our no less loving son of Albany,
We have this hour a constant* will to [determined
publish

Our daughters' several dowers, that future strife
May be prevented now. The princes, France
and Burgundy,

Great rivals in our youngest daughter's love,
Long in our court have made their amorous
sojourn,

Act I Scene 1

And here are to be answer'd. Tell me, my daughters,

Since now we will divest us both of rule,
Interest of territory, cares of state,
Which of you shall we say doth love us most?
That we our largest bounty may extend
Where nature doth with merit challenge.

Goneril,
Our eldest-born, speak first.

Gon. Sir, I love you more than words can wield
the matter ;
Dearer than eye-sight, space, and liberty ;
Beyond what can be valued, rich or rare ;
No less than life, with grace, health, beauty,
honour ;

As much as child e'er loved, or father found ;
A love that makes breath poor, and speech
unable ;

Beyond all manner of so much I love you.

Cor. [*Aside*] What shall Cordelia do? Love,
and be silent.

Lear. Of all these bounds, even from this line
to this,
With shadowy forests and with champains
rich'd,

With plenteous rivers and wide-skirted meads,
We make thee lady: to thine and Albany's issue
Be this perpetual. What says our second
daughter,

Our dearest Regan, wife to Cornwall? Speak.

Reg. I am made of that self* metal as [*self-same*]
my sister,

And prize me at her worth. In my true heart
I find she names my very deed of love ;
Only she comes too short: that I profess
Myself an enemy to all other joys,

King Lear

Which the most precious square of sense possesses

And find I am alone felicitate
In your dear highness' love.

Cor. [*Aside*] Then poor Cordelia!
And yet not so, since I am sure my love's
More richer than my tongue.

Lear. To thee and thine hereditary ever
Remain this ample third of our fair kingdom ;
No less in space, validity* and pleasure, [value
Than that conferr'd on Goneril. Now, our joy,
Although the last and least, to whose young love
The vines of France and milk of Burgundy
Strive to be interest'd; what can you say to draw
A third more opulent than your sisters? Speak.

Cor. Nothing, my lord.

Lear. Nothing!

Cor. Nothing.

Lear. Nothing will come of nothing: speak again.

Cor. Unhappy that I am, I cannot heave
My heart into my mouth : I love your majesty
According to my bond* ; nor more nor less. [*duty*

Lear. How, how, Cordelia! mend your speech
a little,
Lest it may mar your fortunes.

Cor. Good my lord,
You have begot me, bred me, loved me : I
Return those duties back as are right fit,
Obey you, love you, and most honour you.
Why have my sisters husbands, if they say
They love you all? Haply, when I shall wed,
That lord whose hand must take my plight
shall carry

Half my love with him, half my care and duty :
Sure, I shall never marry like my sisters,

Act I Scene 1

To love my father all.

Lear. But goes thy heart with this?

Cor. Ay, good my lord.

Lear. So young, and so untender?

Cor. So young, my lord, and true.

Lear. Let it be so; thy truth then be thy dower:

For, by the sacred radiance of the sun,

The mysteries of Hecate and the night;

By all the operation of the orbs

From whom we do exist, and cease to be;

Here I disclaim all my paternal care,

Propinquity and property of blood,

And as a stranger to my heart and me

Hold thee from this for ever. The barbarous

Scythian,

Or he that makes his generation messes

To gorge his appetite, shall to my bosom

Be as well neighbour'd, pitied and relieved,

As thou my sometime daughter.

Kent.

Good my liege,—

Lear. Peace, Kent!

Come not between the dragon and his wrath.

I loved her most, and thought to set my rest*

On her kind nursery. Hence, and avoid my sight!
[stake my all]

So be my grave my peace, as here I give

Her father's heart from her! Call France. Who

stirs?

Call Burgundy. Cornwall and Albany,

With my twodaughters'dowers digest this third:

Let pride, which she calls plainness, marry her.

I do invest you jointly with my power,

Pre-eminence and all the large effects

That troop with majesty. Ourself, by monthly

course,

With reservation of an hundred knights,

King Lear

By you to be sustain'd, shall our abode
Make with you by due turns. Only we still retain
The name and all the additions* to a king; [titles
The sway, revenue, execution of the rest,
Beloved sons, be yours : which to confirm,
This coronet part betwixt you. [*Giving the crown.*

Kent. Royal Lear,
Whom I have ever honour'd as my king,
Loved as my father, as my master follow'd,
As my great patron thought on in my prayers,—

Lear. The bow is bent and drawn ; make from
the shaft.* [get out of the way of

Kent. Let it fall rather, though the fork*
invade [barbed arrow-head

The region of my heart : be Kent unmannerly,
When Lear is mad. What wouldst thou do, old
man ?

Think'st thou that duty shall have dread to speak,
When power to flattery bows ? To plainness
honour's bound,

When majesty stoops to folly. Reverse thy
doom ;

And in thy best consideration check
This hideous rashness : answer my life my judg-
ment,

Thy youngest daughter does not love thee least ;
Nor are those empty-hearted whose low sound
Reverbs* no hollowness. [reverberates

Lear. Kent, on thy life, no more.

Kent. My life I never held but as a pawn
To wage against thy enemies ; nor fear to lose it,
Thy safety being the motive.

Lear. Out of my sight !

Kent. See better, Lear, and let me still remain
The true blank* of thine eye. [centre

Lear. Now, by Apollo,—

Act I Scene 1

Kent. Now, by Apollo, king,
Thou swear'st thy gods in vain.

Lear. O, vassal! miscreant!
[*Laying his hand on his sword.*]

Alb. } Dear sir, forbear.
Corn. }

Kent. Do;

Kill thy physician, and the fee bestow
Upon the foul disease. Revoke thy doom;
Or, whilst I can vent clamour from my throat,
I'll tell thee thou dost evil.

Lear. Hear me, recreant!
On thine allegiance, hear me!
Since thou hast sought to make us break our vow,
Which we durst never yet, and with strain'd pride
To come between our sentence and our power,
Which nor our nature nor our place can bear,
Our potency made good, take thy reward.
Five days we do allot thee, for provision
To shield thee from diseases of the world,
And on the sixth to turn thy hated back
Upon our kingdom: if, on the tenth day
following,
Thy banish'd trunk be found in our dominions,
The moment is thy death. Away! By Jupiter,
This shall not be revoked.

Kent. Fare thee well, king: sith thus thou
wilt appear,
Freedom lives hence, and banishment is here.
[*To Cordelia*] The gods to their dear shelter take
thee, maid.
That justly think'st and hast most rightly said!
[*To Regan and Goneril*] And your large speeches
may your deeds approve,
That good effects may spring from words of
love.

King Lear

Thus Kent, O princes, bids you all adieu ;
He'll shape his old course in a country new.

[*Exit.*

*Flourish. Re-enter Gloucester, with France,
Burgundy and Attendants.*

Glou. Here's France and Burgundy, my noble
lord.

Lear. My lord of Burgundy,
We first address towards you, who with this king
Hath rivall'd for our daughter: what, in the
least,

Will you require in present dower with her,
Or cease your quest of love?

Bur. Most royal majesty,
I crave no more than hath your highness offer'd,
Nor will you tender less.

Lear. Right noble Burgundy,
When she was dear to us, we did hold her so ;
But now her price is fall'n. Sir, there she stands:
If aught within that little seeming substance,
Or all of it, with our displeasure pieced,* [eked out
And nothing more, may fitly like your grace,
She's there, and she is yours.

Bur. I know no answer.

Lear. Will you, with those infirmities she
owes,* [owns
Unfriended, new-adopted to our hate,
Dower'd with our curse and stranger'd with our
oath,

Take her, or leave her?

Bur. Pardon me, royal sir ;
Election makes not up* on such con- [resolves not
ditions.

Lear. Then leave her, sir ; for, by the power
that made me,

Act I Scene 1

I tell you all her wealth. [*To France*] For you,
great king,
I would not from your love make such a stray,
To match you where I hate; therefore beseech
you

To avert your liking a more worthier way
Than on a wretch whom nature is ashamed
Almost to acknowledge hers.

France. This is most strange,
That she, that even but now was your best object,
The argument of your praise, balm of your age,
Most best, most dearest, should in this trice of
time

Commit a thing so monstrous, to dismantle
So many folds of favour. Sure, her offence
Must be of such unnatural degree,
That monsters it, or your fore-vouch'd affection
Fall'n into taint: which to believe of her,
Must be a faith that reason without miracle
Could never plant in me.

Cor. I yet beseech your majesty,—
If for I want that glib and oily art,
To speak and purpose not, since what I well
intend,

I'll do't before I speak,—that you make known
It is no vicious blot, murder, or foulness,
No unchaste action, or dishonour'd step,
That hath deprived me of your grace and favour;
But even for want of that for which I am richer,
A still*-soliciting eye, and such a tongue [*constantly*]
As I am glad I have not, though not to have it
Hath lost me in your liking.

Lear. Better thou
Hadst not been born than not to have pleased
me better.

France. Is it but this, a tardiness in nature,

King Lear

Which often leaves the history unspoke
That it intends to do? My lord of Burgundy,
What say you to the lady? Love's not love
When it is mingled with regards that stand
Aloof from the entire point. Will you have her?
She is herself a dowry.

Bur. Royal Lear,
Give but that portion which yourself proposed,
And here I take Cordelia by the hand,
Duchess of Burgundy.

Lear. Nothing: I have sworn; I am firm.

Bur. I am sorry, then, you have so lost a father
That you must lose a husband.

Cor. Peace be with Burgundy!
Since that respects of fortune are his love,
I shall not be his wife.

France. Fairest Cordelia, that art most rich,
being poor;
Most choice, forsaken; and most loved, despised!
Thee and thy virtues here I seize upon:
Be it lawful I take up what's cast away.
Gods, gods! 'tis strange that from their cold'st
neglect
My love should kindle to inflamed respect.
Thy dowerless daughter, king, thrown to my
chance,

Is queen of us, of ours, and our fair France:
Not all the dukes of waterish* Burgundy [watery
Can buy this unprized precious maid of me.
Bid them farewell, Cordelia, though unkind:
Thou lovest here, a better where to find.

Lear. Thou hast her, France: let her be thine;
for we
Have no such daughter, nor shall ever see
That face of hers again. Therefore be gone
Without our grace, our love, our benison.

Act I Scene 1

Come, noble Burgundy. [*Flourish. Exeunt all but France, Goneril, Regan, and Cordelia.*]

France. Bid farewell to your sisters.

Cor. The jewels of our father, with wash'd eyes
Cordelia leaves you : I know you what you are ;
And, like a sister, am most loath to call
Your faults as they are named. Use well our
father :

To your professed bosoms I commit him :

But yet, alas, stood I within his grace,

I would prefer him to a better place.

So farewell to you both.

Reg. Prescribe not us our duties.

Gon.

Let your study

Be to content your lord, who hath received you
At fortune's alms. You have obedience scanted,
And well are worth the want that you have
wanted.

Cor. Time shall unfold what plaited cunning
hides :

Who cover faults, at last shame them derides.

Well may you prosper !

France.

Come, my fair Cordelia.

[*Exeunt France and Cordelia.*]

Gon. Sister, it is not a little I have to say of
what most nearly appertains to us both. I
think our father will hence to-night.

Reg. That's most certain, and with you ; next
month with us.

Gon. You see how full of changes his age is ;
the observation we have made of it hath not
been little : he always loved our sister most ;
and with what poor judgment he hath now cast
her off appears too grossly.

Reg. 'Tis the infirmity of his age : yet he hath
ever but slenderly known himself.

King Lear

Gon. The best and soundest of his time hath been but rash; then must we look to receive from his age, not alone the imperfections of long ingrafted condition, but therewithal the unruly waywardness that infirm and choleric years bring with them.

Reg. Such unconstant starts are we like to have from him as this of Kent's banishment.

Gon. There is further compliment of leave-taking between France and him. Pray you, let's hit together: if our father carry authority with such dispositions as he bears, this last surrender of his will but offend us.

Reg. We shall further think on't.

Gon. We must do something, and i' the heat.*
[*Exeunt.* [i.e. while the iron's hot

SCENE 2.—The Earl of Gloucester's Castle.

Enter Edmund, with a letter.

Edm. Thou, nature, art my goddess; to thy law
My services are bound. Wherefore should I
Stand in the plague of custom, and permit
The curiosity* of nations to deprive [scrupulousness
me,

For that I am some twelve or fourteen moon-
shines

Lag* of a brother? Why bastard? where- [behind
fore base?

When my dimensions are as well compact,
My mind as generous and my shape as true,
As honest madam's issue? Why brand they us
With base? with baseness? bastardy? base, base?
Who, in the lusty stealth of nature, take
More composition and fierce quality
Than doth, within a dull, stale, tired bed,
Go to the creating a whole tribe of fops,

Act I Scene 2

Got 'tween asleep and wake? Well, then,
Legitimate Edgar, I must have your land:
Our father's love is to the bastard Edmund
As to the legitimate: fine word, 'legitimate'!
Well, my legitimate, if this letter speed
And my invention thrive, Edmund the base
Shall top* the legitimate. I grow; I prosper:
Now, gods, stand up for bastards! [cap, surpass

Enter Gloucester.

Glou. Kent banish'd thus! and France in
choler parted!
And the king gone to-night! subscribed* his
power! [surrendered
Confined to exhibition*! All [limited to an allowance
this done
Upon the gad*! Edmund, how [spur of the moment
now! what news?

Edm. So please your lordship, none.

[Putting up the letter.]

Glou. Why so earnestly seek you to put up
that letter?

Edm. I know no news, my lord.

Glou. What paper were you reading?

Edm. Nothing, my lord.

Glou. No? What needed then that terrible
dispatch of it into your pocket? the quality of
nothing hath not such need to hide itself. Let's
see: come, if it be nothing, I shall not need
spectacles.

Edm. I beseech you, sir, pardon me: it is a
letter from my brother, that I have not all o'er-
read; and for so much as I have perused, I find
it not fit for your o'er-looking.

Glou. Give me the letter, sir.

Edm. I shall offend, either to detain or give

King Lear

it. The contents, as in part I understand them, are to blame.

Glou. Let's see, let's see.

Edm. I hope, for my brother's justification, he wrote this but as an essay or taste of my virtue.

Glou. [Reads] '*This policy and reverence of age makes the world bitter to the best of our times; keeps our fortunes from us till our oldness cannot relish them. I begin to find an idle and fond bondage in the oppression of aged tyranny; who sways, not as it hath power, but as it is suffered. Come to me, that of this I may speak more. If our father would sleep till I waked him, you should enjoy half his revenue for ever, and live the beloved of your brother,*

EDGAR.'

Hum!—Conspiracy!—'Sleep till I waked him, you should enjoy half his revenue,'—My son Edgar! Had he a hand to write this? a heart and brain to breed it in?—When came this to you? who brought it?

Edm. It was not brought me, my lord; there's the cunning of it; I found it thrown in at the casement of my closet.

Glou. You know the character to be your brother's?

Edm. If the matter were good, my lord, I durst swear it were his; but, in respect of that, I would fain think it were not.

Glou. It is his.

Edm. It is his hand, my lord; but I hope his heart is not in the contents.

Glou. Hath he never heretofore sounded you in this business?

Edm. Never, my lord; but I have heard him

Act I Scene 2

oft maintain it to be fit, that, sons at perfect age, and fathers declining, the father should be as ward to the son, and the son manage his revenue.

Glou. O villain, villain! His very opinion in the letter! Abhorred villain! Unnatural, detested, brutish villain! worse than brutish! Go, sirrah, seek him; I'll apprehend him: abominable villain! Where is he?

Edm. I do not well know, my lord. If it shall please you to suspend your indignation against my brother till you can derive from him better testimony of his intent, you shall run a certain course; where, if you violently proceed against him, mistaking his purpose, it would make a great gap in your own honour and shake in pieces the heart of his obedience. I dare pawn down my life for him that he hath wrote this to feel my affection to your honour, and to no further pretence of danger.

Glou. Think you so?

Edm. If your honour judge it meet, I will place you where you shall hear us confer of this, and by an auricular assurance have your satisfaction; and that without any further delay than this very evening.

Glou. He cannot be such a monster—

Edm. Nor is not, sure.

Glou. To his father, that so tenderly and entirely loves him. Heaven and earth! Edmund, seek him out: wind me into him, I pray you: frame the business after your own wisdom. I would unstate myself, to be in a due resolution.*

[give my rank to be quite satisfied]

Edm. I will seek him, sir, presently; convey the business as I shall find means, and acquaint you withal.

King Lear

Glou. These late eclipses in the sun and moon portend no good to us: though the wisdom of* nature can reason it thus and [knowledge of thus, yet nature finds itself scourged by the sequent effects: love cools, friendship falls off, brothers divide: in cities, mutinies; in countries, discord; in palaces, treason; and the bond cracked 'twixt son and father. This villain of mine comes under the prediction; there's son against father: the king falls from bias of nature*; there's father against [natural inclination child. We have seen the best of our time: machinations, hollowness, treachery and all ruinous disorders follow us-disquietly to our graves. Find out this villain, Edmund; it shall lose thee nothing; do it carefully. And the noble and true-hearted Kent banished! his offence, honesty! 'Tis strange. [*Exit.*

Edm. This is the excellent foppery of the world, that, when we are sick in fortune—often the surfeit of our own behaviour—we make guilty of our disasters the sun, the moon and the stars: as if we were villains on necessity; fools by heavenly compulsion; knaves, thieves and treachers, by spherical predominance*; drunkards, liars and [influence of the spheres adulterers, by an enforced obedience of planetary influence; and all that we are evil in, by a divine thrusting on. An admirable evasion of whoremasterman, to lay his goatish disposition to the charge of a star! My father compounded with my mother under the dragon's tail, and my nativity was under Ursa Major; so that it follows I am rough and lecherous. Tut, I should have been that I am, had the maidenliest star in the firmament twinkled on my bastardising. Edgar—

Act I Scene 2

Enter Edgar.

and pat he comes like the catastrophe of the old comedy : my cue is villanous melancholy, with a sigh like Tom o' Bedlam. O, these eclipses do portend these divisions ! fa, sol, la, mi.

Edg. How now, brother Edmund ! what serious contemplation are you in ?

Edm. I am thinking, brother, of a prediction I read this other day, what should follow these eclipses.

Edg. Do you busy yourself about that ?

Edm. I promise you, the effects he writes of succeed unhappily ; as of unnaturalness between the child and the parent ; death, dearth, dissolutions of ancient amities ; divisions in state, menaces and maledictions against king and nobles ; needless diffidences, banishment of friends, dissipation of cohorts, nuptial breaches, and I know not what.

Edg. How long have you been a sectary astronomical ?

Edm. Come, come ; when saw you my father last ?

Edg. Why, the night gone by.

Edm. Spake you with him ?

Edg. Ay, two hours together.

Edm. Parted you in good terms ? Found you no displeasure in him by word or countenance ?

Edg. None at all.

Edm. Bethink yourself wherein you may have offended him : and at my entreaty forbear his presence till some little time hath qualified the heat of his displeasure ; which at this instant so rageth in him, that with the mischief of your person it would scarcely allay.

King Lear

Edg. Some villain hath done me wrong.

Edm. That's my fear. I pray you, have a continent forbearance till the speed of his rage goes slower; and, as I say, retire with me to my lodging, from whence I will fitly bring you to hear my lord speak: pray ye, go; there's my key: if you do stir abroad, go armed.

Edg. Armed, brother!

Edm. Brother, I advise you to the best; go armed: I am no honest man if there be any good meaning towards you: I have told you what I have seen and heard; but faintly, nothing like the image and horror of it: pray you, away.

Edg. Shall I hear from you anon?

Edm. I do serve you in this business.

[*Exit Edgar.*]

A credulous father, and a brother noble,
Whose nature is so far from doing harms
That he suspects none; on whose foolish
honesty

[*contrivances*]

My practices* ride easy. I see the business.
Let me, if not by birth, have lands by wit:
All with me's meet that I can fashion fit. [*Exit.*]

SCENE 3.—The Duke of Albany's Palace.

Enter Goneril, and Oswald, her steward.

Gon. Did my father strike my gentleman for chiding of his fool?

Osw. Yes, madam.

Gon. By day and night he wrongs me; every hour

He flashes into one gross crime or other,
That sets us all at odds: I'll not endure it:
His knights grow riotous, and himself up-
braids us

Act I Scene 4

On every trifle. When he returns from hunting,
I will not speak with him ; say I am sick :
If you come slack of former services,
You shall do well ; the fault of it I'll answer.

Osw. He's coming, madam ; I hear him.

[*Horns within.*

Gon. Put on what weary negligence you
please,
You and your fellows ; I'd have it come to
question :
If he distaste it, let him to our sister,
Whose mind and mine, I know, in that are one,
Not to be over-ruled. Idle old man,
That still would manage those authorities
That he hath given away ! Now, by my life,
Old fools are babes again, and must be used
With checks as flatteries,—when they are seen
abused.
Remember what I tell you.

Osw. Well, madam.

Gon. And let his knights have colder looks
among you ;
What grows of it, no matter ; advise your
fellows so :
I would breed from hence occasions, and I shall,
That I may speak : I'll write straight to my
sister,
To hold my very course. Prepare for dinner.

[*Exeunt.*

SCENE 4.—A Hall in the Same.

Enter Kent, disguised.

Kent. If but as well I other accents borrow,
That can my speech defuse,* my good [pervade
intent
May carry through itself to that full issue

King Lear

For which I razed my likeness. Now, banish'd
Kent,
If thou canst serve where thou dost stand
condemn'd,
So may it come, thy master, whom thou lovest,
Shall find thee full of labours.

Horns within. Enter Lear, Knights, and Attendants.

Lear. Let me not stay a jot for dinner; go get it ready. [*Exit an Attendant.*] How now! what art thou?

Kent. A man, sir.

Lear. What dost thou profess? what wouldst thou with us?

Kent. I do profess to be no less than I seem; to serve him truly that will put me in trust; to love him that is honest; to converse with him that is wise, and says little; to fear judgment; to fight when I cannot choose; and to eat no fish.*

[to be no Papist]

Lear. What art thou?

Kent. A very honest-hearted fellow, and as poor as the king.

Lear. If thou be as poor for a subject as he is for a king, thou art poor enough. What wouldst thou?

Kent. Service.

Lear. Who wouldst thou serve?

Kent. You.

Lear. Dost thou know me, fellow?

Kent. No, sir; but you have that in your countenance which I would fain call master.

Lear. What's that?

Kent. Authority.

Lear. What services canst thou do?

Act I Scene 4

Kent. I can keep honest counsel, ride, run, mar a curious tale in telling it, and deliver a plain message bluntly: that which ordinary men are fit for, I am qualified in; and the best of me is diligence.

Lear. How old are thou?

Kent. Not so young, sir, to love a woman for singing, nor so old to dote on her for any thing: I have years on my back forty eight.

Lear. Follow me; thou shalt serve me: if I like thee no worse after dinner, I will not part from thee yet. Dinner, ho, dinner! Where's my knave? my fool? Go you, and call my fool hither.
[*Exit an Attendant.*]

Enter Oswald.

You, you, sirrah, where's my daughter?

Osw. So please you,— [Exit.]

Lear. What says the fellow there? Call the clotpoll* back. [*Exit a Knight.*] Where's [blockhead my fool, ho? I think the world's asleep.

Re-enter Knight.

How now! where's that mongrel?

Knight. He says, my lord, your daughter is not well.

Lear. Why came not the slave back to me when I called him?

Knight. Sir, he answered me in the roundest manner, he would not.

Lear. He would not!

Knight. My lord, I know not what the matter is; but, to my judgment, your highness is not entertained with that ceremonious affection as you were wont; there's a great abatement of kindness appears as well in the general de-

King Lear

pendants as in the duke himself also and your daughter.

Lear. Ha! sayest thou so?

Knight. I beseech you, pardon me, my lord, if I be mistaken; for my duty cannot be silent when I think your highness wronged.

Lear. Thou but rememberest me of mine own conception: I have perceived a most faint neglect of late; which I have rather blamed as mine own jealous curiosity than as a very pretence and purpose of unkindness: I will look further into't. But where's my fool? I have not seen him this two days.

Knight. Since my young lady's going into France, sir, the fool hath much pined away.

Lear. No more of that; I have noted it well. Go you, and tell my daughter I would speak with her. [*Exit an Attendant.*] Go you, call hither my fool. [*Exit an Attendant.*]

Re-enter Oswald.

O, you sir, you, come you hither, sir: who am I, sir?

Osw. My lady's father.

Lear. 'My lady's father'! my lord's knave: you whoreson dog! you slave! you cur!

Osw. I am none of these, my lord; I beseech your pardon.

Lear. Do you bandy looks with me, you rascal?
[*Striking him.*]

Osw. I'll not be struck, my lord.

Kent. Nor tripped neither, you base foot-ball player.
[*Tripping up his heels.*]

Lear. I thank thee, fellow; thou servest me, and I'll love thee.

Kent. Come, sir, arise, away! I'll teach you

Act I Scene 4

differences : away, away ! If you will measure your lubber's length again, tarry : but away ! go to ; have you wisdom ? so.

[*Pushes Oswald out.*]

Lear. Now, my friendly knave, I thank thee : there's earnest of thy service.

[*Giving Kent money.*]

Enter Fool.

Fool. Let me hire him too : here's my coxcomb. [*Offering Kent his cap.*]

Lear. How now, my pretty knave ! how dost thou ?

Fool. Sirrah, you were best take my coxcomb.

Kent. Why, fool ?

Fool. Why, for taking one's part that's out of favour : nay, an thou canst not smile as the wind sits, thou 'lt catch cold shortly : there, take my coxcomb : why, this fellow has banished two on's daughters, and did the third a blessing against his will ; if thou follow him, thou must needs wear my coxcomb. How now, nuncle* ! Would I had two coxcombs and two [mine uncle daughters !

Lear. Why, my boy ?

Fool. If I gave them all my living, I 'ld keep my coxcombs myself. There 's mine ; beg another of thy daughters.

Lear. Take heed, sirrah ; the whip.

Fool. Truth's a dog must to kennel ; he must be whipped out, when Lady, the brach,* may stand by the fire and stink. [*female hound*

Lear. A pestilent gall to me !

Fool. Sirrah, I 'll teach thee a speech.

Lear. Do.

King Lear

Fool. Mark it, nuncle :

Have more than thou showest,
Speak less than thou knowest,
Lend less than thou owest,* [ownest]
Ride more than thou goest,
Learn more than thou trowest,
Set less* than thou throwest ; [stake less]
Leave thy drink and thy whore,
And keep in-a-door,
And thou shalt have more
Than two tens to a score.

Kent. This is nothing, fool.

Fool. Then 'tis like the breath of an unfee'd lawyer; you gave me nothing for't. Can you make no use of nothing, nuncle?

Lear. Why, no, boy; nothing can be made out of nothing.

Fool. [*To Kent*] Prithee, tell him, so much the rent of his land comes to: he will not believe a fool.

Lear. A bitter fool!

Fool. Dost thou know the difference, my boy, between a bitter fool and a sweet fool?

Lear. No, lad; teach me.

Fool. That lord that counsell'd thee

To give away thy land,
Come place him here by me,

Do thou for him stand :

The sweet and bitter fool

Will presently appear ;

The one in motley here, [pointing to the king]

The other found out there.*

Lear. Dost thou call me fool, boy?

Fool. All thy other titles thou hast given away; that thou wast born with.

Kent. This is not altogether fool, my lord.

Fool. No, faith, lords and great men will not

Act I Scene 4

let me; if I had a monopoly out, they would have part on't; and ladies too, they will not let me have all the fool to myself; they'll be snatching. Give me an egg, nuncle, and I'll give thee two crowns.

Lear. What two crowns shall they be?

Fool. Why, after I have cut the egg i' the middle, and eat up the meat, the two crowns of the egg. When thou clovest thy crown i' the middle, and gavest away both parts, thou borest thy ass on thy back o'er the dirt: thou hadst little wit in thy bald crown, when thou gavest thy golden one away. If I speak like myself in this, let him be whipped that first finds it so.

[Singing]

Fools had ne'er less wit in a year;

For wise men are grown foppish,

They know not how their wits to wear,

Their manners are so apish.

Lear. When were you wont to be so full of songs, sirrah?

Fool. I have used it, nuncle, ever since thou madest thy daughters thy mother: for when thou gavest them the rod, and put'st down thine own breeches,

[Singing]

Then they for sudden joy did weep,

And I for sorrow sung,

That such a king should play bo-peep,

And go the fools among.

Prithee, nuncle, keep a schoolmaster that can teach thy fool to lie: I would fain learn to lie.

Lear. An you lie, sirrah, we'll have you whipped.

Fool. I marvel what kin thou and thy daughters are: they'll have me whipped for

King Lear

speaking true, thou'lt have me whipped for lying; and sometimes I am whipped for holding my peace. I had rather be any kind o' thing than a fool: and yet I would not be thee, nuncle; thou hast pared thy wit o' both sides, and left nothing i' the middle.—Here comes one o' the parings.

Enter Goneril.

Lear. How now, daughter! what makes that frontlet on? Methinks you are too much of late i' the frown.

Fool. Thou wast a pretty fellow when thou hadst no need to care for her frowning; now thou art an O without a figure; I am better than thou art now; I am a fool, thou art nothing. [*To Goneril.*] Yes, forsooth, I will hold my tongue; so your face bids me, though you say nothing. Mum, mum,

*He that keeps nor crust nor crum,
Weary of all, shall want some.*

[*Pointing to Lear*] That's a sheal'd peascod.*

[shelled peapod]

Gon. Not only, sir, this your all-licensed fool,
But other of your insolent retinue
Do hourly carp and quarrel; breaking forth
In rank and not-to-be-endured riots. Sir,
I had thought, by making this well known unto
you,
To have found a safe redress; but now grow
fearful,
By what yourself too late have spoke and done,
That you protect this course, and put it on
By your allowance*; which if you [approbation
should, the fault
Would not 'scape censure, nor the redress sleep,
Which, in the tender of a wholesome weal,

Act I Scene 4

Might in their working do you that offence,
Which else were shame, that then necessity
Will call discreet proceeding.

Fool. For, you know, nuncle,

*The hedge-sparrow fed the cuckoo so long,
That it had it head bit off by it young.*

So, out went the candle, and we were left darkling.

Lear. Are you our daughter?

Gon. Come, sir,

I would you would make use of that good
wisdom,

Whereof I know you are fraught; and put away
These dispositions, that of late transform you
From what you rightly are.

Fool. May not an ass know when the cart
draws the horse? Whoop, Jug! I love thee.

Lear. Doth any here know me? This is not
Lear:

Doth Lear walk thus? speak thus? Where are
his eyes?

Either his notion weakens, his discernings
Are lethargied—Ha! waking? 'tis not so.

Who is it that can tell me who I am?

Fool. Lear's shadow.

Lear. I would learn that; for, by the marks
of sovereignty, knowledge, and reason, I should
be false persuaded I had daughters.

Fool. Which they will make an obedient
father.

Lear. Your name, fair gentlewoman?

Gon. This admiration,* sir, is much [astonishment
o' the savour

Of other your new pranks. I do beseech you
To understand my purposes aright:
As you are old and reverend, you should be wise.
Here do you keep a hundred knights and squires;

King Lear

Men so disorder'd, so debosh'd and bold,
That this our court, infected with their manners,
Shows like a riotous inn : epicurism and lust
Make it more like a tavern or a brothel
Than a graced palace. The shame itself doth
speak

For instant remedy : be then desired
By her, that else will take the thing she begs,
A little to disquantity your train ;
And the remainder, that shall still depend,
To be such men as may besort your age,
And know themselves and you.

Lear. Darkness and devils !
Saddle my horses ; call my train together.
Degenerate bastard ! I'll not trouble thee :
Yet have I left a daughter.

Gon. You strike my people : and your disorder'd rabble
Make servants of their betters.

Enter Albany.

Lear. Woe, that too late repents,—[*To Albany*]
O, sir, are you come?
Is it your will? Speak, sir. Prepare my horses.
Ingratitude, thou marble-hearted fiend,
More hideous when thou show'st thee in a child
Than the sea-monster !

Alb. Pray, sir, be patient.

Lear. [*To Goneril*] Detested kite ! thou liest :
My train are men of choice and rarest parts,
That all particulars of duty know,
And in the most exact regard support
The worships of their name. O most small fault,
How ugly didst thou in Cordelia show !
That, like an engine, wrench'd my frame of nature
From the fix'd place ; drew from my heart all love,

Act I Scene 4

And added to the gall. O Lear, Lear, Lear!
Beat at this gate, that let thy folly in,

[Striking his head.]

And thy dear judgment out! - Go, go, my people.

Alb. My lord, I am guiltless, as I am ignorant
Of what hath moved you.

Lear. It may be so, my lord.
Hear, nature, hear; dear goddess, hear!
Suspend thy purpose, if thou didst intend
To make this creature fruitful;
Into her womb convey sterility;
Dry up in her the organs of increase;
And from her derogate* body never spring [corrupt
A babe to honour her! If she must teem,
Create her child of spleen; that it may live
And be a thwart disnatured torment to her!
Let it stamp wrinkles in her brow of youth;
With cadent tears fret channels in her cheeks;
Turn all her mother's pains and benefits
To laughter and contempt; that she may feel
How sharper than a serpent's tooth it is
To have a thankless child! Away, away! [*Exit.*]

Alb. Now, gods that we adore, whereof comes
this?

Gon. Never afflict yourself to know the cause;
But let his disposition have that scope
That dotage gives it.

Re-enter Lear.

Lear. What, fifty of my followers at a clap!
Within a fortnight!

Alb. What's the matter, sir?

Lear. I'll tell thee: [*To Goneril*] Life and
death! I am ashamed
That thou hast power to shake my manhood
thus;

King Lear

That these hot tears, which break from me perforce,

Should make thee worth them. Blasts and fogs
upon thee! [ineurable]

The untented* woundings of a father's curse
Pierce every sense about thee! Old fond eyes,
Beweep this cause again, I'll pluck ye out,
And cast you, with the waters that you lose,
To temper clay. Yea, is it come to this?
Let it be so: yet have I left a daughter,
Who, I am sure, is kind and comfortable:
When she shall hear this of thee, with her nails
She'll flay thy wolfish visage. Thou shalt find
That I'll resume the shape which thou dost think
I have cast off for ever: thou shalt, I warrant
thee.

[Exeunt Lear, Kent, and Attendants.]

Gon. Do you mark that, my lord?

Alb. I cannot be so partial, Goneril,
To the great love I bear you,—

Gon. Pray you, content. What, Oswald, ho!
[To the Fool] You, sir, more knave than fool,
after your master.

Fool. Nuncle Lear, nuncle Lear, tarry and take
the fool with thee.

A fox, when one has caught her,
And such a daughter,
Should sure to the slaughter,
If my cap would buy a halter:
So the fool follows after. [Exit.]

Gon. This man hath had good counsel: a
hundred knights!

'Tis politic and safe to let him keep
At point* a hundred knights: yes, [ready armed]
that, on every dream,
Each buzz, each fancy, each complaint, dislike,

Act I Scene 5

He may enguard* his dotage with their [enclose
powers,

And hold our lives in mercy. Oswald, I say!

Alb. Well, you may fear too far.

Gon. Safer than trust too far:

Let me still take away the harms I fear,

Not fear still to be taken: I know his heart.

What he hath utter'd I have writ my sister:

If she sustain him and his hundred knights,

When I have show'd the unfitness,—

Re-enter Oswald.

How now, Oswald!

What, have you writ that letter to my sister?

Osw. Yes, madam.

Gon. Take you some company, and away to
horse:

Inform her full of my particular fear;

And thereto add such reasons of your own

As may compact it more. Get you gone;

And hasten your return. [*Exit Oswald.*] No,
no, my lord,

This milky gentleness and course of yours

Though I condemn not, yet, under pardon,

You are much more attack'd for want of wisdom
Than praised for harmful mildness.

Alb. How far your eyes may pierce I cannot
tell:

Striving to better, oft we mar what's well.

Gon. Nay, then—

[await the event]

Alb. Well, well; the event.*

[*Exeunt.*]

SCENE 5.—Court before the Same.

Enter Lear, Kent, and Fool.

Lear. Go you before to Gloucester with these
letters. Acquaint my daughter no further with
any thing you know than comes from her de-

King Lear

mand out of the letter. If your diligence be not speedy, I shall be there afore you.

Kent. I will not sleep, my lord, till I have delivered your letter. [Exit.]

Fool. If a man's brains were in's heels, were't not in danger of kibes*? [chilblains]

Lear. Ay, boy.

Fool. Then, I prithee, be merry; thy wit shall ne'er go slip-shod.

Lear. Ha, ha, ha!

Fool. Shalt see thy other daughter will use thee kindly; for though she's as like this as a crab's like an apple, yet I can tell what I can tell.

Lear. Why, what canst thou tell, my boy?

Fool. She will taste as like this as a crab does to a crab. Thou canst tell why one's nose stands i' the middle on's face?

Lear. No.

Fool. Why, to keep one's eyes of either side's nose; that what a man cannot smell out, he may spy into.

Lear. I did her wrong—

Fool. Canst tell how an oyster makes his shell?

Lear. No.

Fool. Nor I neither; but I can tell why a snail has a house.

Lear. Why?

Fool. Why, to put his head in; not to give it away to his daughters, and leave his horns without a case.

Lear. I will forget my nature. So kind a father! Be my horses ready?

Fool. Thy asses are gone about 'em. The reason why the seven stars* are no more than seven is a pretty reason. [? the Pleiades, or the Great Bear]

Lear. Because they are not eight?

Act II Scene 1

Fool. Yes, indeed : thou wouldst make a good fool.

Lear. To take 't again perforce ! Monster ingratitude !

Fool. If thou wert my fool, nuncle, I 'ld have thee beaten for being old before thy time.

Lear. How's that ?

Fool. Thou shouldst not have been old till thou hadst been wise.

Lear. O, let me not be mad, not mad, sweet heaven !

Keep me in temper : I would not be mad !

Enter Gentleman.

How now ! are the horses ready ?

Gent. Ready, my lord.

Lear. Come, boy.

Fool. She that's a maid now, and laughs at my departure

Shall not be a maid long, unless things be cut shorter. *[Exeunt.]*

ACT II.

SCENE 1.—The Earl of Gloucester's Castle.

Enter Edmund, and Curan meets him.

Edm. Save thee, Curan.

Cur. And you, sir. I have been with your father, and given him notice that the Duke of Cornwall and Regan his duchess will be here with him this night.

Edm. How comes that ?

Cur. Nay, I know not. You have heard of the news abroad ; I mean the whispered ones, for they are yet but ear-kissing arguments ?

Edm. Not I : pray you, what are they ?

Cur. Have you heard of no likely wars toward, 'twixt the Dukes of Cornwall and Albany ?

King Lear

Edm. Not a word.

Cur. You may do, then, in time. Fare you well, sir. *[Exit.]*

Edm. The duke be here to-night? The better! best!

This weaves itself perforce into my business.
My father hath set guard to take my brother;
And I have one thing, of a queasy* question, *[ticklish]*
Which I must act: briefness and fortune, work!
Brother, a word; descend: brother, I say!

Enter Edgar.

My father watches: O sir, fly this place;
Intelligence is given where you are hid;
You have now the good advantage of the night:
Have you not spoken 'gainst the Duke of Cornwall?

He's coming hither; now, i' the night, i' the haste,
And Regan with him: have you nothing said
Upon his party* 'gainst the Duke of *[on his side]*
Albany?

Advise* yourself.

[recollect]

Edg. I am sure on 't, not a word.

Edm. I hear my father coming: pardon me;
In cunning I must draw my sword upon you:
Draw; seem to defend yourself; now quit you well.

Yield: come before my father. Light, ho, here!
Fly, brother. Torches, torches! So, farewell.

[Exit Edgar.]

Some blood drawn on me would beget opinion

[Wounds his arm.]

Of my more fierce endeavour: I have seen
drunkards

Do more than this in sport. Father, father!
Stop, stop! No help?

Act II Scene 1

Enter Gloucester, and Servants with torches.

Glou. Now, Edmund, where's the villain?

Edm. Here stood he in the dark, his sharp sword out,

Mumbling of wicked charms, conjuring the moon

To stand's auspicious mistress.

Glou. But where is he?

Edm. Look, sir, I bleed.

Glou. Where is the villain, Edmund?

Edm. Fled this way, sir. When by no means he could—

Glou. Pursue him, ho! Go after. [*Exeunt some Servants.*] By no means what?

Edm. Persuade me to the murder of your lordship;

But that I told him, the revenging gods
'Gainst parricides did all their thunders bend;
Spoke, with how manifold and strong a bond
The child was bound to the father; sir, in fine,
Seeing how loathly opposite I stood
To his unnatural purpose, in fell motion
With his prepared sword he charges home
My unprovided body, lanced mine arm:
But when he saw my best alarm'd spirits,*

[best spirits alarm'd]
Bold in the quarrel's right, roused to the encounter,

Or whether gasted* by the noise I made, [frightened]
Full suddenly he fled.

Glou. Let him fly far:

Not in this land shall he remain uncaught;

And found—dispatch. The noble duke my master,

My worthy arch* and pattern, comes to-night: [chief]
By his authority I will proclaim it,

King Lear

That he which finds him shall deserve our
thanks,
Bringing the murderous coward to the stake;
He that conceals him, death.

Edm. When I dissuaded him from his intent,
And found him pight* to do it, with [settled
curst* speech [angry

I threaten'd to discover him : he replied,
'Thou unpossessing bastard ! dost thou think,
If I would stand against thee, could the reposal
Of any trust, virtue, or worth in thee
Make thy words faith'd ? No : what I should
deny—

As this I would ; ay, though thou didst produce
My very character*—I 'ld turn it all [handwriting
To thy suggestion,* plot, and damned [temptation
practice :

And thou must make a dullard of the world,
If they not thought the profits of my death
Were very pregnant* and potential spurs [ready
To make thee seek it.'

Glou. Strong and fasten'd villain !
Would he deny his letter ? I never got him.
[*Tucket within.*

Hark, the duke's trumpets ! I know not why
he comes.

All ports I 'll bar ; the villain shall not 'scape ;
The duke must grant me that : besides, his picture
I will send far and near, that all the kingdom
May have due note of him ; and of my land,
Loyal and natural boy, I 'll work the means
To make thee capable.

Enter Cornwall, Regan, and Attendants.

Corn. How now, my noble friend ! since I
came hither,

Act II Scene 1

Which I can call but now, I have heard strange news.

Reg. If it be true, all vengeance comes too short

Which can pursue the offender. How dost, my lord?

Glou. O, madam, my old heart is crack'd, is crack'd!

Reg. What, did my father's godson seek your life?

He whom my father named? your Edgar?

Glou. O, lady, lady, shame would have it hid!

Reg. Was he not companion with the riotous knights

That tend upon my father?

Glou. I know not, madam: 'tis too bad, too bad.

Edm. Yes, madam, he was of that consort.

Reg. No marvel, then, though he were ill affected:

'Tis they have put him on the old man's death,
To have the expense and waste of his revenues.
I have this present evening from my sister
Been well inform'd of them; and with such
cautions,

That if they come to sojourn at my house,
I'll not be there.

Corn. Nor I, assure thee, Regan.

Edmund, I hear that you have shown your father
A child-like office.

Edm. 'Twas my duty, sir.

Glou. He did bewray his practice*; and [design
received

This hurt you see, striving to apprehend him.

Corn. Is he pursued?

Glou. Ay, my good lord.

King Lear

Corn. If he be taken, he shall never more
Be fear'd of doing harm : make your own purpose,

How in my strength you please. For you,
Edmund,

Whose virtue and obedience doth this instant
So much commend itself, you shall be ours :
Natures of such deep trust we shall much need ;
You we first seize on.

Edm. I shall serve you, sir,
Truly, however else.

Glou. For him I thank your grace.

Corn. You know not why we came to visit
you,—

Reg. Thus, out of season, threading dark-eyed
night :

Occasions, noble Gloucester, of some poise,* [weight
Wherein we must have use of your advice :

Our father he hath writ, so hath our sister,
Of differences, which I least thought it fit

To answer from our home ; the several messengers

From hence attend dispatch. Our good old
friend,

Lay comforts to your bosom ; and bestow

Your needful counsel to our business,

Which craves the instant use.

Glou. I serve you, madam :
Your graces are right welcome.

[*Flourish. Exeunt.*]

SCENE 2.—Before Gloucester's Castle.

Enter Kent and Oswald, severally.

Osw. Good dawning to thee, friend : art of
this house ?

Kent. Ay.

Act II Scene 2

Osw. Where may we set our horses?

Kent. I' the mire.

Osw. Prithee, if thou lovest me, tell me.

Kent. I love thee not.

Osw. Why, then, I care not for thee.

Kent. If I had thee in Lipsbury pinfold, *^[a pound]
I would make thee care for me.

Osw. Why dost thou use me thus? I know thee not.

Kent. Fellow, I know thee.

Osw. What dost thou know me for?

Kent. A knave; a rascal; an eater of broken meats; a base, proud, shallow, beggarly, three-suited, hundred-pound, filthy, worsted-stocking knave; a lily-livered, action-taking whoreson; a glass-gazing, superserviceable, finical rogue; one-trunk-inheriting slave; one that wouldst be a bawd, in way of good service, and art nothing but the composition of a knave, beggar, coward, pandar, and the son and heir of a mongrel bitch; one whom I will beat into clamorous whining, if thou deniest the least syllable of thy addition.* [title

Osw. Why, what a monstrous fellow art thou, thus to rail on one that is neither known of thee nor knows thee!

Kent. What a brazen-faced varlet art thou, to deny thou knowest me! Is it two days ago since I tripped up thy heels, and beat thee before the king? Draw, you rogue: for, though it be night, yet the moon shines; I'll make a sop o' the moonshine of you: draw, you whoreson cullionly barber-monger, draw. *[Drawing his sword.]*

Osw. Away! I have nothing to do with thee.

Kent. Draw, you rascal: you come with letters against the king; and take vanity the

King Lear

puppet's part against the royalty of her father : draw, you rogue, or I'll so carbonado* your ^[slash] shanks : draw, you rascal ; come your ways.

Osw. Help, ho ! murder ! help !

Kent. Strike, you slave ; stand, rogue ; stand, you neat slave, strike. [Beating him.]

Osw. Help, ho ! murder ! murder !

Enter Edmund, with his rapier drawn, Cornwall, Regan, Gloucester, and Servants.

Edm. How now ! What's the matter ?

[Parting them.]

Kent. With you, goodman boy, an you please : come, I'll flesh* ye ; come on, young ^[i.e. teach] master.

Glou. Weapons ! arms ! What's the matter here ?

Corn. Keep peace, upon your lives : He dies that strikes again. What is the matter ?

Reg. The messengers from our sister and the king.

Corn. What is your difference ? speak.

Osw. I am scarce in breath, my lord.

Kent. No marvel, you have so bestirred your valour. You cowardly rascal, nature disclaims in thee : a tailor made thee.

Corn. Thou art a strange fellow : a tailor make a man ?

Kent. Ay, a tailor, sir : a stone-cutter or a painter could not have made him so ill, though he had been but two hours at the trade.

Corn. Speak yet, how grew your quarrel ?

Osw. This ancient ruffian, sir, whose life I have spared at suit of his gray beard,—

Kent. Thou whoreson zed ! thou unnecessary letter ! My lord, if you will give me leave, I will

Act II Scene 2

tread this unbolted* villain into mortar, [unrefined
and daub the walls of a jakes with him. Spare
my gray beard, you wagtail?

Corn. Peace, sirrah!

You beastly knave, know you no reverence?

Kent. Yes, sir; but anger hath a privilege.

Corn. Why art thou angry?

Kent. That such a slave as this should wear a
sword,

Who wears no honesty. Such smiling rogues
as these,

Like rats, oft bite the holy cords* a-twain [family ties
Which are too intrinse* t' unloose; [intricate
smooth* every passion [flatter

That in the natures of their lords rebel;

Bring oil to fire, snow to their colder moods;

Reneg,* affirm, and turn their hal- [deny
cyon* beaks [king-fisher

With every gale and vary of their masters,

Knowing nought, like dogs, but following.

A plague upon your epileptic visage!

Smile you my speeches as I were a fool?

Goose, if I had you upon Sarum plain,

I'd drive ye cackling home to Camelot.

Corn. What, art thou mad, old fellow?

Glou. How fell you out? say that.

Kent. No contraries hold more antipathy
Than I and such a knave.

Corn. Why dost thou call him knave? What's
his offence?

Kent. His countenance likes me not.

Corn. No more, perchance, does mine, nor
his, nor hers.

Kent. Sir, 'tis my occupation to be plain:
I have seen better faces in my time
Than stands on any shoulder that I see

King Lear

Before me at this instant.

Corn.

This is some fellow,

Who, having been praised for bluntness, doth
affect

[overdoes the part

A saucy roughness, and constrains the garb*

Quite from his nature : he cannot flatter, he,

An honest mind and plain, he must speak truth !

An they will take it, so ; if not, he's plain.

These kind of knaves I know, which in this
plainness

Harbour more craft and more corrupter ends

Than twenty silly ducking observants*

That stretch their duties nicely.

[bowing courtiers

Kent. Sir, in good sooth, in sincere verity,

Under the allowance of your great aspect,

Whose influence, like the wreath of radiant fire

On flickering Phœbus' front,—

Corn.

What mean'st by this ?

Kent. To go out of my dialect, which you
discommend so much. I know, sir, I am no
flatterer : he that beguiled you in a plain
accent was a plain knave ; which for my part
I will not be, though I should win your dis-
pleasure to entreat me to't.

Corn. What was the offence you gave him ?

Osw. I never gave him any :

It pleased the king his master very late [owing to
To strike at me, upon* his misconstruction ;
When he, conjunct, and flattering his dis-
pleasure,

Tripp'd me behind : being down, insulted, rail'd,
And put upon him such a deal of man,

That worthied him, got praises of the king

For him attempting who was self-subdued ;

And, in the fleshment* of this dread exploit,

Drew on me here again.

[elation

Act II Scene 2

Kent. None of these rogues and cowards
But Ajax is their fool.

Corn. Fetch forth the stocks!
You stubborn ancient knave, you reverend
braggart,
We'll teach you—

Kent. Sir, I am too old to learn :
Call not your stocks for me ; I serve the king ;
On whose employment I was sent to you :
You shall do small respect, show too bold malice
Against the grace and person of my master,
Stocking his messenger.

Corn. Fetch forth the stocks ! As I have life
and honour,
There shall he sit till noon.

Reg. Till noon ! till night, my lord ; and all
night too.

Kent. Why, madam, if I were your father's
dog,
You should not use me so.

Reg. Sir, being his knave, I will.

Corn. This is a fellow of the self-same colour
Our sister speaks of. Come, bring away the
stocks ! *[Stocks brought out.]*

Glou. Let me beseech your grace not to do so :
His fault is much, and the good king his master
Will check him for't : your purposed low
correction

Is such as basest and contemned'st wretches
For pilferings and most common trespasses
Are punish'd with : the king must take it ill,
That he so slightly valued in his messenger,
Should have him thus restrain d.

Corn. I'll answer that.

Reg. My sister may receive it much more
worse,

King Lear

To have her gentleman abused, assaulted,
For following her affairs. Put in his legs.

[Kent is put in the stocks.]

Come, my good lord, away.

[Exeunt all but Gloucester and Kent.]

Glou. I am sorry for thee, friend; 'tis the
duke's pleasure,
Whose disposition, all the world well knows,
Will not be rubb'd nor stopp'd : I 'll entreat for
thee.

Kent. Pray, do not, sir : I have watched and
travell'd hard ;
Some time I shall sleep out, the rest I 'll
whistle.

A good man's fortune may grow out at heels :
Give you good morrow !

Glou. The duke's to blame in this; 'twill be ill
taken. *[Exit.]*

Kent. Good king, that must approve* [realise]
the common saw,
Thou out of heaven's benediction comest
To the warm sun !
Approach, thou beacon to this under globe,
That by thy comfortable beams I may
Peruse this letter ! Nothing almost sees miracles
But misery : I know 'tis from Cordelia,
Who hath most fortunately been inform'd
Of my obscured course ; and shall find time
From this enormous state, seeking to give
Losses their remedies. All weary and o'er-
watch'd,
Take vantage, heavy eyes, not to behold
This shameful lodging.
Fortune, good night : smile once more ; turn
thy wheel ! *[Sleeps.]*

Act II Scene 3

SCENE 3.—A Wood.

Enter Edgar.

Edg. I heard myself proclaim'd ;
And by the happy hollow of a tree
Escaped the hunt. No port is free ; no place,
That guard and most unusual vigilance
Does not attend my taking. Whiles I may
'scape,

I will preserve myself : and am bethought
To take the basest and most poorest shape
That ever penury, in contempt of man,
Brought near to beast : my face I'll grime with
filth.

Blanket my loins, elf all my hair in knots,
And with presented nakedness out-face
The winds and persecutions of the sky.
The country gives me proof and precedent
Of Bedlam beggars, who with roaring voices
Strike in their numb'd and mortified bare arms
Pins, wooden pricks, nails, sprigs of rosemary ;
And with this horrible object, from low farms,
Poor pelting* villages, sheep-cotes, and [paltry
mills.

Sometime with lunatic bans, sometime with
prayers,
Enforce their charity. Poor Turlygod! poor
Tom!

That's something yet : Edgar I nothing am.
[*Erit.*]

SCENE 4.—Before Gloucester's Castle. Kent
in the stocks.

Enter Lear, Fool, and Gentleman.

Lear. 'Tis strange that they should so depart
from home.

King Lear

And not send back my messenger.

Gent. As I learn'd,
The night before there was no purpose in them
Of this remove.

Kent. Hail to thee, noble master !

Lear. Ha !
Makest thou this shame thy pastime ?

Kent. No, my lord.

Fool. Ha, ha ! he wears cruel garters. Horses
are tied by the heads, dogs and bears by the
neck, monkeys by the loins, and men by the
legs : when a man's over-lusty at legs, then he
wears wooden nether-stocks.*

[stockings]

Lear. What's he that hath so much thy
place mistook
To set thee here ?

Kent. It is both he and she ;
Your son and daughter.

Lear. No.

Kent. Yes.

Lear. No, I say.

Kent. I say, yea.

Lear. No, no, they would not.

Kent. Yes, they have.

Lear. By Jupiter, I swear, no.

Kent. By Juno, I swear, ay.

Lear. They durst not do't ;
They could not, would not do't ; 'tis worse
than murder,

To do upon respect such violent outrage.
Resolve me, with all modest haste, which way
Thou mightst deserve, or they impose, this usage,
Coming from us.

Kent. My lord, when at their home
I did commend your highness' letters to them,
Ere I was risen from the place that show'd

Act II Scene 4

My duty kneeling, came there a reeking post,
Stew'd in his haste, half breathless, panting forth
From Goneril his mistress salutations ;
Deliver'd letters, spite of intermission,* [interruption
Which presently they read : on whose contents
They summoned up their meiny,* straight [followers
took horse ;

Commanded me to follow and attend
The leisure of their answer ; gave me cold looks :
And meeting here the other messenger,
Whose welcome I perceived had poison'd mine—
Being the very fellow that of late
Display'd so saucily against your highness—
Having more man than wit about me, drew :
He raised the house with loud and coward cries.
Your son and daughter found this trespass worth
The shame which here it suffers.

Fool. Winter's not gone yet, if the wild-geese
fly that way.

Fathers that wear rags
Do make their children blind ;
But fathers that bear bags
Shall see their children kind.
Fortune, that arrant whore,
Ne'er turns the key to the poor.

But, for all this, thou shalt have as many dolours
for thy daughters as thou canst tell in a year.

Lear. O, how this mother swells up toward
my heart !

Hysterica passio, down, thou climbing sorrow,
Thy element's below ! Where is this daughter ?

Kent. With the earl, sir, here within.

Lear. Follow me not ; stay here. [Exit.

Gent. Made you no more offence but what you
speak of ?

Kent. None.

King Lear

How chance the king comes with so small a train?

Fool. An thou hadst been set i' the stocks for that question, thou hadst well deserved it.

Kent. Why, fool?

Fool. We'll set thee to school to an ant, to teach thee there's no labouring i' the winter. All that follow their noses are led by their eyes but blind men; and there's not a nose among twenty but can smell him that's stinking. Let go thy hold when a great wheel runs down a hill, lest it break thy neck with following it; but the great one that goes up the hill, let him draw thee after. When a wise man gives thee better counsel, give me mine again: I would have none but knaves follow it, since a fool gives it.

That sir which serves and seeks for gain,

And follows but for form,

Will pack when it begins to rain,

And leave thee in the storm.

But I will tarry; the fool will stay,

And let the wise man fly:

The knave turns fool that runs away;

The fool no knave, perdy.

Kent. Where learned you this, fool?

Fool. Not i' the stocks, fool.

Re-enter Lear, with Gloucester.

Lear. Deny to speak with me? They are sick?
they are weary?

They have travell'd all the night? Mere fetches*;

The images of revolt and flying off. [pretext]

Fetch me a better answer.

Glou. My dear lord,
You know the fiery quality of the duke;
How unremoveable and fix'd he is
In his own course.

Lear. Vengeance! plague! death! confusion!

Act II Scene 4

Fiery? what quality? Why, Gloucester, Gloucester,
I'd speak with the Duke of Cornwall and his wife.

Glou. Well, my good lord, I have inform'd them so.

Lear. Inform'd them! Dost thou understand me, man?

Glou. Ay, my good lord.

Lear. The king would speak with Cornwall;
the dear father

Would with his daughter speak, commands her service:

Are they inform'd of this? My breath and blood!

Fiery? the fiery duke? Tell the hot duke that—
No, but not yet: may be he is not well:

Infirmity doth still* neglect all office [ever
Whereto our health is bound; we are not ourselves

When nature being oppress'd commands the mind

To suffer with the body: I'll forbear;
And am fall'n out with my more headier* [impetuous
will,

To take the indisposed and sickly fit
For the sound man. [Looking on Kent.] Death
on my state! wherefore

Should he sit here? This act persuades me
That this remotion* of the duke and her [removal
Is practice only. Give me my servant forth.
Go tell the duke and 's wife I'd speak with them,
Now, presently: bid them come forth and hear me,
Or at their chamber-door I'll beat the drum
Till it cry sleep to death.

Glou. I would have all well betwixt you. [Exit.

King Lear

Lear. O me, my heart, my rising heart! But,
down!

Fool. Cry to it, nuncle, as the cockney did to the eels when she put 'em i' the paste alive; she knapped 'em o' the coxcombs with a stick, and cried 'Down, wantons, down!' 'Twas her brother that, in pure kindness to his horse, buttered his hay.

*Re-enter Gloucester, with Cornwall, Regan,
and Servants.*

Lear. Good morrow to you both.

Corn. Hail to your grace!

[*Kent is set at liberty.*]

Reg. I am glad to see your highness.

Lear. Regan, I think you are; I know what
reason

I have to think so: if thou shouldst not be glad,
I would divorce me from thy mother's tomb,
Sepulchring an adultress. [*To Kent*] O, are you
free?

Some other time for that. Beloved Regan,
Thy sister's naught: O Regan, she hath tied
Sharp-tooth'd unkindness, like a vulture, here:
[*Points to his heart.*]

I can scarce speak to thee: thou'lt not believe
With how depraved a quality—O Regan

Reg. I pray you, sir, take patience: I have hope
You less know how to value her desert
Than she to scant her duty.

Lear. Say, how is that?

Reg. I cannot think my sister in the least
Would fail her obligation: if, sir, perchance
She have restrain'd the riots of your followers,
'Tis on such ground and to such wholesome end
As clears her from all blame.

Act II Scene 4

Lear. My curses on her !

Reg. O, sir, you are old ;
Nature in you stands on the very verge
Of her confine : you should be ruled and led
By some discretion that discerns your state
Better than you yourself. Therefore I pray you
That to our sister you do make return ;
Say you have wrong'd her, sir.

Lear. Ask her forgiveness ?
Do you but mark how this becomes the house :
[*Kneeling.*] ' Dear daughter, I confess that I am
old ;

Age is unnecessary : on my knees I beg
That you'll vouchsafe me raiment, bed and
food.'

Reg. Good sir, no more ; these are unsightly
tricks :
Return you to my sister.

Lear. [*Rising*] Never, Regan :
She hath abated me of half my train ;
Look'd black upon me ; struck me with her
tongue,

Most serpent-like, upon the very heart :
All the stored vengeance of heaven fall
On her ingrateful top ! Strike her young bones,
You taking* airs, with lameness. [malignant

Corn. Fie, sir, fie !

Lear. You nimble lightnings, dart your blind-
ing flames
Into her scornful eyes. Infect her beauty,
You fen-suck'd fogs, drawn by the powerful sun,
To fall and blast her pride.

Reg. O the blest gods ! so will you wish on me,
When the rash mood is on.

Lear. No, Regan, thou shalt never have my
curse :

King Lear

Thy tender-hefted* nature shall not {daintily-housed
give

Thee o'er to harshness : her eyes are fierce, but
thine

Do comfort and not burn. 'Tis not in thee
To grudge my pleasures, to cut off my train,
To bandy hasty words, to scant my sizes,*

And in conclusion to oppose the bolt [allowances

Against my coming in : thou better know'st

The offices of nature, bond of childhood,

Effects of courtesy, dues of gratitude ;

Thy half o' the kingdom hast thou not forgot,

Wherein I thee endow'd.

Reg. Good sir, to the purpose.

Lear. Who put my man i' the stocks ?

[*Tucket within.*

Corn. What trumpet's that ?

Reg. I know't ; my sister's ; this approves her
letter,

That she would soon be here.

Enter Oswald.

Is your lady come ?

Lear. This is a slave, whose easy-borrow'd
pride

Dwells in the fickle grace of her he follows.

Out, varlet, from my sight !

Corn. What means your grace ?

Lear. Who stock'd my servant ? Regan, I
have good hope

Thou didst not know on't. Who comes here ?

Enter Goneril.

O heavens,

If you do love old men, if your sweet sway

Allow* obedience, if yourselves are old, [approve

Make it your cause ; send down, and take my
part !

Act II Scene 4

[To Goneril] Art not ashamed to look upon this beard?

O Regan, wilt thou take her by the hand?

Gon. Why not by the hand, sir? How have I offended?

All's not offence that indiscretion finds
And dotage terms so.

Lear. O sides, you are too tough;
Will you yet hold? How came my man i' the stocks?

Corn. I set him there, sir: but his own disorders

Deserved much less advancement.* [a worse situation

Lear. You! did you?

Reg. I pray you, father, being weak, seem so.
If, till the expiration of your month,
You will return and sojourn with my sister,
Dismissing half your train, come then to me:
I am now from home, and out of that provision
Which shall be needful for your entertainment.

Lear. Return to her, and fifty men dismiss'd?
No, rather I abjure all roofs, and choose
To wage against the enmity o' the air;
To be a comrade with the wolf and owl,—
Necessity's sharp pinch! Return with her?
Why, the hot-blooded France, that dowerless
took

Our youngest born, I could as well be brought
To knee his throne, and, squire-like, pension beg
To keep base life afoot. Return with her?
Persuade me rather to be slave and sumpter*
To this detested groom. [pack-horse

[Pointing at Oswald.

Gon. At your choice, sir.

Lear. I prithee, daughter, do not make me mad:
I will not trouble thee, my child; farewell:

King Lear

We'll no more meet, no more see one another :
But yet thou art my flesh, my blood, my
daughter ;

Or rather a disease that's in my flesh,
Which I must needs call mine : thou art a boil,
A plague-sore, an embossed carbuncle,
In my corrupted blood. But I'll not chide thee ;
Let shame come when it will, I do not call it :
I do not bid the thunder-bearer shoot,
Nor tell tales of thee to high-judging Jove :
Mend when thou canst ; be better at thy leisure,
I can be patient ; I can stay with Regan,
I and my hundred knights.

Reg. Not altogether so :
I look'd not for you yet, nor am provided
For your fit welcome. Give ear, sir, to my sister ;
For those that mingle reason with your passion
Must be content to think you old, and so—
But she knows what she does.

Lear. Is this well spoken ?
Reg. I dare avouch it, sir : what, fifty followers ?
Is it not well ? What should you need of more ?
Yea, or so many, sith that both charge and
danger
Speak 'gainst so great a number ? How, in one
house,

Should many people under two commands
Hold amity ? 'Tis hard, almost impossible.

Gon. Why might not you, my lord, receive
attendance
From those that she calls servants or from mine ?

Reg. Why not, my lord ? If then they chanced
to slack you,
We could control them. If you will come to me,—
For now I spy a danger,—I entreat you
To bring but five and twenty : to no more

Act II Scene 4

Will I give place or notice.

Lear. I gave you all—

Reg. And in good time you gave it.

Lear. Made you my guardians, my depositaries ;

But kept a reservation to be follow'd

With such a number. What, must I come to you

With five and twenty, Regan ? said you so ?

Reg. And speak 't again, my lord ; no more with me.

Lear. Those wicked creatures yet do look well-favour'd,

When others are more wicked ; not being the worst

Stands in some rank of praise. [*To Goneril*]

I'll go with thee :

Thy fifty yet doth double five-and-twenty,

And thou art twice her love.

Gon. Hear me, my lord :

What need you five and twenty, ten, or five,

To follow in a house where twice so many

Have a command to tend you ?

Reg. What need one ?

Lear. O, reason not the need : our basest beggars

Are in the poorest thing superfluous :

Allow not nature more than nature needs,

Man's life's as cheap as beast's : thou art a lady ;

If only to go warm were gorgeous,

Why, nature needs not what thou gorgeous wear'st,

Which scarcely keeps thee warm. But for true need,—

You heavens, give me that patience, patience I need !

King Lear

You see me here, you gods, a poor old man,
As full of grief as age; wretched in both.
If it be you that stirs these daughters' hearts
Against their father, fool me not so much
To bear it tamely; touch me with noble anger,
And let not women's weapons, water-drops,
Stain my man's cheeks!—No, you unnatural
hags,

I will have such revenges on you both,
That all the world shall—I will do such things,—
What they are, yet I know not; but they shall be
The terrors of the earth. You think I'll weep;
No, I'll not weep:

I have full cause of weeping; but this heart
Shall break into a hundred thousand flaws,
Or ere I'll weep. O fool, I shall go mad!

[Exeunt Lear, Gloucester, Kent, and Fool.]

Storm and tempest.

Corn. Let us withdraw; 'twill be a storm.

Reg. This house is little; the old man and his
people

Cannot be well bestow'd.

Gon. 'Tis his own blame; hath put myself
from rest,

And must needs taste his folly.

Reg. For his particular, I'll receive him gladly,
But not one follower.

Gon. So am I purposed.

Where is my lord of Gloucester?

Corn. Follow'd the old man forth: he is re-
turn'd.

Re-enter Gloucester.

Glou. The king is in high rage.

Corn. Whither is he going

Glou. He calls to horse; but will I know not
whither.

Act III Scene 1

Corn. 'Tis best to give him way; he leads himself.

Gon. My lord, entreat him by no means to stay.

Glou. Alack, the night comes on, and the bleak winds

Do sorely ruffle; for many miles about
There's scarce a bush.

Reg. O, sir, to wilful men,
The injuries that they themselves procure
Must be their schoolmasters. Shut up your doors:

He is attended with a desperate train;
And what they may incense him to, being apt
To have his ear abused, wisdom bids fear.

Corn. Shut up your doors, my lord; 'tis a wild night:

My Regan counsels well: come out o' the storm.
[*Exeunt.*]

ACT III.

SCENE I.—A Heath.

Storm still. Enter Kent and a Gentleman, meeting.

Kent. Who's there, besides foul weather?

Gent. One minded like the weather, most unquietly.

Kent. I know you. Where's the king?

Gent. Contending with the fretful elements;
Bids the wind blow the earth into the sea,
Or swell the curled waters 'bove the main,
That things might change or cease; tears his white hair,

Which the impetuous blasts, with eyeless rage,
Catch in their fury, and make nothing of;
Strives in his little world of man to out-scorn

King Lear

The to-and-fro-conflicting wind and rain.
This night, wherein the cub-drawn bear would
couch,

The lion and the belly-pinched wolf
Keep their fur dry, unbonneted he runs,
And bids what will take all.

Kent. But who is with him?

Gent. None but the fool; who labours to outjest
His heart-struck injuries.

Kent. Sir, I do know you;
And dare, upon the warrant of my note, * [observation]
Commend a dear thing to you. There is division,
Although as yet the face of it be cover'd
With mutual cunning, 'twixt Albany and
Cornwall;

Who have—as who have not, that their great
stars

Throned and set high?—servants, who seem no
less,

Which are to France the spies and speculations
Intelligent of our state; what hath been seen,
Either in snuffs and packings* [quarrels and intrigues]
of the dukes,

Or the hard rein which both of them have borne
Against the old kind king; or something deeper,
Whereof perchance these are but furnishings;

But, true it is, from France there comes a power
Into this scatter'd kingdom; who already,
Wise in our negligence, have secret feet

In some of our best ports, and are at point
To show their open banner. Now to you:

If on my credit you dare build so far

To make your speed to Dover, you shall find
Some that will thank you, making just report
Of how unnatural and bemaddening sorrow

The king hath cause to plain.

Act III Scene 2

I am a gentleman of blood and breeding,
And from some knowledge and assurance offer
This office to you.

Gent. I will talk further with you.

Kent. No, do not.

For confirmation that I am much more
Than my out-wall, open this purse, and take
What it contains. If you shall see Cordelia,—
As fear not but you shall,—show her this ring;
And she will tell you who your fellow is
That yet you do not know. Fie on this storm!
I will go seek the king.

Gent. Give me your hand: have you no more
to say?

Kent. Few words, but, to effect, more than
all yet;
That, when we have found the king,—in which
your pain
That way, I'll this,—he that first lights on him
Holla the other. [*Exeunt severally.*]

SCENE 2.—Another Part of the Heath.

Storm still.

Enter Lear and Fool.

Lear. Blow, winds, and crack your cheeks!
rage! blow!

You cataracts and hurricanoes, spout
Till you have drench'd our steeples, drown'd the
cocks*!

[weather-cocks]

You sulphurous and thought*- [i.e. quick as thought
executing fires,

Vaunt - couriers* to oak - cleaving [forerunners
thunderbolts,

Singe my white head! And thou, all-shaking
thunder,

Smite flat the thick rotundity o' the world!

King Lear

Crack nature's moulds, all germens* spill [germs
at once,

That make ingrateful man !

Fool. O nuncle, court holy-water* in a [flattery
dry house is better than this rain-water out o'
door. Good nuncle, in, and ask thy daughters'
blessing : here 's a night pities neither wise man
nor fool.

Lear. Rumble thy bellyfull ! Spit, fire ! spout,
rain !

Nor rain, wind, thunder, fire, are my daughters :
I tax not you, you elements, with unkindness ;
I never gave you kingdom, call'd you children,
You owe me no subscription* : then let [submission
fall

Your horrible pleasure ; here I stand, your slave,
A poor, infirm, weak and despised old man :
But yet I call you servile ministers,
That have with two pernicious daughters
join'd

Your high-engender'd battles 'gainst a head
So old and white as this. O ! O ! 'tis foul !

Fool. He that has a house to put 's head in has
a good head-piece.

*The cod-piece that will house
Before the head has any,
The head and he shall louse ;
So beggars marry many.
The man that makes his toe
What he his heart should make
Shall of a corn ery woe,
And turn his sleep to wake.*

For there was never yet fair woman but she
made mouths in a glass.

Lear. No, I will be the pattern of all patience ;
I will say nothing.

Act III Scene 2

Enter Kent.

Kent. Who's there?

Fool. Marry, here's grace and a codpiece;
that's a wise man and a fool.

Kent. Alas, sir, are you here? things that
love night

Love not such nights as these; the wrathful skies
Gallow* the very wanderers of the dark, [frighten
And makethem keep their caves: since I was man,
Such sheets of fire, such bursts of horrid thunder,
Such groans of roaring wind and rain, I never
Remember to have heard: man's nature cannot
carry

The affliction nor the fear.

Lear. Let the great gods,
That keep this dreadful pother o'er our heads,
Find out their enemies now. Tremble, thou
wretch,

That hast within thee undivulged crimes,
Unwhipp'd of justice: hide thee, thou bloody
hand;

Thou perjured, and thou simular man* [simulator
of virtue

That art incestuous: caitiff, to pieces shake,
That under covert and convenient seeming
Hast practised on man's life: close pent-up guilts,
Rive your concealing continents and cry
These dreadful summoners grace. I am a man
More sinn'd against than sinning.

Kent. Alack, bare-headed!
Gracious my lord, hard by here is a hovel;
Some friendship will it lend you 'gainst the
tempest:

Repose you there; while I to this hard house—
More harder than the stones whereof 'tis raised;
Which even but now, demanding after you,

King Lear

Denied me to come in—return, and force
Their scanty courtesy.

Lear. My wits begin to turn.
Come on, my boy: how dost, my boy? art cold?
I am cold myself. Where is this straw, my
fellow?

The art of our necessities is strange,
That can make vile things precious. Come,
your hovel.

Poor fool and knave, I have one part in my heart
That's sorry yet for thee.

Fool. [Singing]

*He that has and a little tiny wit,—
With hey, ho, the wind and the rain,—
Must make content with his fortunes fit,
For the rain it raineth every day.*

Lear. True, my good boy. Come, bring us to
this hovel. [Exeunt Lear and Kent.]

Fool. This is a brave night to cool a courtesan.
I'll speak a prophecy ere I go:

When priests are more in word than matter;
When brewers mar their malt with water;
When nobles are their tailors' tutors;
No heretics burn'd, but wenches' suitors;
When every case in law is right;
No squire in debt, nor no poor knight;
When slanders do not live in tongues;
Nor cutpurses come not to throngs;
When usurers tell their gold i' the field,
And bawds and whores do churches build;
Then shall the realm of Albion
Come to great confusion:
Then comes the time, who lives to see't,
That going shall be used with feet.

This prophecy Merlin shall make; for I live
before his time. [Exit.]

Act III Scene 4

SCENE 3.—Gloucester's Castle.

Enter Gloucester and Edmund.

Glou. Alack, alack, Edmund, I like not this unnatural dealing. When I desired their leave that I might pity him, they took from me the use of mine own house; charged me, on pain of their perpetual displeasure, neither to speak of him, entreat for him, nor any way sustain him.

Edm. Most savage and unnatural!

Glou. Go to; say you nothing. There's a division betwixt the dukes; and a worse matter than that: I have received a letter this night; 'tis dangerous to be spoken; I have locked the letter in my closet: these injuries the king now hears will be revenged home; there's part of a power already footed: we must incline to the king. I will seek him, and privily relieve him: go you and maintain talk with the duke, that my charity be not of him perceived: if he ask for me, I am ill and gone to bed. Though I die for it, as no less is threatened me, the king my old master must be relieved. There is some strange thing toward, Edmund; pray you, be careful. *[Exit.]*

Edm. This courtesy, forbid thee, shall the duke instantly know; and of that letter too; This seems a fair deserving, and must draw me That which my father loses; no less than all: The younger rises when the old doth fall. *[Exit.]*

SCENE 4.—The Heath. Before a Hovel.

Enter Lear, Kent, and Fool.

Kent. Here is the place, my lord; good my lord, enter:
The tyranny of the open night's too rough

King Lear

For nature to endure. [Storm still.

Lear. Let me alone.

Kent. Good my lord, enter here.

Lear. Wilt break my heart?

Kent. I had rather break mine own. Good my lord, enter.

Lear. Thou think'st 'tis much that this contentious storm

Invades us to the skin : so 'tis to thee ;
But where the greater malady is fix'd,
The lesser is scarce felt. Thou 'ldst shun a bear ;
But if thy flight lay toward the raging sea,
Thou 'ldst meet the bear i' the mouth. When
the mind's free,

The body's delicate : the tempest in my mind
Doth from my senses take all feeling else
Save what beats there. Filial ingratitude !
Is it not as this mouth should tear this hand
For lifting food to 't ? But I will punish home.
No, I will weep no more. In such a night
To shut me out ! Pour on ; I will endure.
In such a night as this ! O Regan, Goneril !
You old kind father, whose frank heart gave all,—
O, that way madness lies ; let me shun that ;
No more of that.

Kent. Good my lord, enter here.

Lear. Prithee, go in thyself ; seek thine own ease :

This tempest will not give me leave to ponder
On things would hurt me more. But I'll go in.
[To the Fool] In, boy ; go first. You houseless
poverty,—

Nay, get thee in. I'll pray, and then I'll sleep.
[Fool goes in.

Poor naked wretches, wheresoe'er you are,
That bide the pelting of this pitiless storm,

Act III Scene 4

How shall your houseless heads and unfed sides,
Your loop'd* and window'd raggedness, [full of holes
defend you

From seasons such as these? O, I have ta'en
Too little care of this! Take physic, pomp;
Expose thyself to feel what wretches feel,
That thou mayst shake the superflux* [superfluity
to them

And show the heavens more just.

Edg. [Within] Fathom and half, fathom and
half! Poor Tom!

[The Fool runs out from the hovel.

Fool. Come not in here, nuncle, here's a spirit.
Help me, help me!

Kent. Give me thy hand. Who's there?

Fool. A spirit, a spirit: he says his name's
poor Tom.

Kent. What art thou that dost grumble there
i' the straw?

Come forth.

Enter Edgar disguised as a madman.

Edg. Away! the foul fiend follows me!
Through the sharp hawthorn blows the cold
wind.

Hum! go to thy cold bed, and warm thee.

Lear. Hast thou given all to thy two daughters?
And art thou come to this?

Edg. Who gives any thing to poor Tom?
whom the foul fiend hath led through
fire and through flame, and through ford and
whirlpool, o'er bog and quagmire; that hath
laid knives under his pillow, and halters in his
pew; set ratsbane by his porridge; made him
proud of heart, to ride on a bay trotting-horse
over four-inched bridges, to course his own
shadow for a traitor. Bless thy five wits!

King Lear

Tom's a-cold. O, do de, do de, do de. Bless thee from whirlwinds, star-blasting, and taking! Do poor Tom some charity, whom the foul fiend vexes. There could I have him now, and there, and there again, and there.

[*Storm still.*]

Lear. What, have his daughters brought him to this pass? Couldst thou save nothing? Didst thou give them all?

Fool. Nay, he reserved a blanket, else we had been all shamed.

Lear. Now, all the plagues that in the pendulous air
Hang fated o'er men's faults light on thy daughters!

Kent. He hath no daughters, sir.

Lear. Death, traitor! nothing could have subdued nature

To such a lowness but his unkind daughters.
Is it the fashion that discarded fathers
Should have thus little mercy on their flesh?
Judicious punishment! 'twas this flesh begot
Those pelican daughters.

Edg. Pillicock sat on Pillicock-hill:
Allow, allow, loo, loo!

Fool. This cold night will turn us all to fools and madmen.

Edg. Take heed o' the foul fiend: obey thy parents; keep thy word justly; swear not; commit not with man's sworn spouse; set not thy sweet heart on proud array. Tom's a-cold.

Lear. What hast thou been?

Edg. A serving-man, proud in heart and mind; that curled my hair; wore gloves in my cap; served the lust of my mistress' heart, and did the act of darkness with her; swore as

Act III Scene 4

many oaths as I spake words and broke them in the sweet face of heaven : one that slept in the contriving of lust and waked to do it : wine loved I deeply, dice dearly, and in woman out-paramoured the Turk : false of heart, light of ear, bloody of hand ; hog in sloth, fox in stealth, wolf in greediness, dog in madness, lion in prey. Let not the creaking of shoes nor the rustling of silks betray thy poor heart to woman. Keep thy foot out of brothels, thy hand out of plackets, thy pen from lenders' books, and defy the foul fiend.

*Still through the hawthorn blows the cold wind :
Says swum, mun, ha, no, nonny.*

Dolphin my boy, my boy, sessa ! let him* [be quiet
trot by. [Storm still.

Lear. Why, thou wert better in thy grave than to answer with thy uncovered body this extremity of the skies. Is man no more than this ? Consider him well. Thou owest the worm no silk, the beast no hide, the sheep no wool, the cat no perfume. Ha ! here's three on's are sophisticated ! Thou art the thing itself : unaccommodated* man is no [unattired more but such a poor, bare, forked animal as thou art. Off, off, you lendings ! come, unbutton here. [Tearing off his clothes.

Fool. Prithee, nuncle, be contented ; 'tis a naughty night to swim in. Now a little fire in a wild field were like an old lecher's heart ; a small spark, all the rest on's body cold. Look, here comes a walking fire.

Enter Gloucester, with a torch.

Edg. This is the foul fiend Flibbertigibbet : he begins at curfew and walks till the first cock :

King Lear

he gives the web and the pin,* squints the [cataract eye and makes the hare-lip; mildews the white wheat and hurts the poor creature of earth.

St. Withold footed thrice the old*; [wold

He met the night mare and her nine-fold*;

Bid her alight, [nine imps

And her troth plight,

And, aroint thee,* witch, aroint thee! [begone!

Kent. How fares your grace?

Lear. What's he?

Kent. Who's there? What is't you seek?

Glou. What are you there? Your names?

Edg. Poor Tom; that eats the swimming frog, the toad, the tadpole, the wall-newt* and [lizard the water*; that in the fury of his [water-newt heart, when the foul fiend rages, eats cow-dung for sallets; swallows the old rat and the ditch dog; drinks the green mantle of the standing pool; who is whipped from tithing to tithing, and stock-punished, and imprisoned; who hath had three suits to his back, six shirts to his body, horse to ride, and weapon to wear;

But mice and rats, and such small deer,

Have been Tom's food for seven long year.

Beware my follower. Peace, Smulkin; peace, thou fiend!

Glou. What, hath your grace no better company?

Edg. The prince of darkness is a gentleman: Modo he's call'd, and Mahu.

Glou. Our flesh and blood is grown so vile, my lord,

That it doth hate what gets it.

Edg. Poor Tom's a-cold.

Glou. Go in with me: my duty cannot suffer To obey in all your daughters' hard commands:

Act III Scene 4

Though their injunction be to bar my doors
And let this tyrannous night take hold upon you,
Yet have I ventured to come seek you out,
And bring you where both fire and food is ready.

Lear. First let me talk with this philosopher.
What is the cause of thunder?

Kent. Good my lord, take his offer; go into
the house.

Lear. I'll talk a word with this same learned
Theban.

What is your study?

Edg. How to prevent the fiend and to kill
vermin.

Lear. Let me ask you one word in private.

Kent. Importune him once more to go, my lord;
His wits begin to unsettle.

Glou. Canst thou blame him? [*Storm still.*
His daughters seek his death: ah, that good
Kent!

He said it would be thus, poor banish'd man!
Thou say'st the king grows mad; I'll tell thee,
friend,

I am almost mad myself: I had a son,
Now outlaw'd from my blood; he sought my life,
But lately, very late: I loved him, friend;
No father his son dearer: truth to tell thee,
The grief hath crazed my wits. What a night's
this!

I do beseech your grace,—

[*I beg your pardon*

Lear. O, cry you mercy,* sir.

Noble philosopher, your company.

Edg. Tom's a-cold.

Glou. In, fellow, there, into the hovel: keep
thee warm.

Lear. Come, let's in all.

Kent. This way, my lord.

King Lear

Lear. With him ;
I will keep still with my philosopher.
Kent. Good my lord, soothe him ; let him take
the fellow.
Glou. Take him you on.
Kent. Sirrah, come on ; go along with us.
Lear. Come, good Athenian.
Glou. No words, no words : hush.
Edg. Child Rowland to the dark tower came,
His word was still,—Fie, foh, and fum,
I smell the blood of a British man.
[*Exeunt.*]

SCENE 5.—Gloucester's Castle.

Enter Cornwall and Edmund.

Corn. I will have my revenge ere I depart his house.

Edm. How, my lord, I may be censured, that nature thus gives way to loyalty, something fears me to think of.

Corn. I now perceive, it was not altogether your brother's evil disposition made him seek his death ; but a provoking merit, set a-work by a reproveable badness in himself.

Edm. How malicious is my fortune, that I must repent to be just ! This is the letter he spoke of, which approves him an intelligent party to the advantages of France. O heavens ! that this treason were not, or not I the detector !

Corn. Go with me to the duchess.

Edm. If the matter of this paper be certain, you have mighty business in hand.

Corn. True or false, it hath made thee earl of Gloucester. Seek out where thy father is, that he may be ready for our apprehension.

Edm. [*Aside*] If I find him comforting the

Act III Scene 6

king, it will stuff his suspicion more fully.—I will persevere in my course of loyalty, though the conflict be sore between that and my blood.

Corn. I will lay trust upon thee; and thou shalt find a dearer father in my love. [*Exeunt.*]

SCENE 6.—A Chamber in a Farmhouse adjoining the Castle.

Enter Gloucester, Lear, Kent, Fool, and Edgar.

Glou. Here is better than the open air; take it thankfully. I will piece out the comfort with what addition I can: I will not be long from you.

Kent. All the power of his wits have given way to his impatience: the gods reward your kindness! [*Exit Gloucester.*]

Edg. Frateretto calls me, and tells me Nero is an angler in the lake of darkness. Pray, innocent, and beware the foul fiend.

Fool. Prithee, nuncle, tell me whether a madman be a gentleman or a yeoman?

Lear. A king, a king!

Fool. No, he's a yeoman that has a gentleman to his son; for he's a mad yeoman that sees his son a gentleman before him.

Lear. To have a thousand with red burning spits

Come hissing in upon 'em,—

Edg. The foul fiend bites my back.

Fool. He's mad that trusts in the tameness of a wolf, a horse's health, a boy's love, or a whore's oath.

Lear. It shall be done; I will arraign them straight.

[*To Edgar*] Come, sit thou here, most learned justicer;

King Lear

[*To the Fool*] Thou, sapient sir, sit here. Now,
you she foxes!

Edg. Look, where he stands and glares!
Wantest thou eyes at trial, madam?

Come o'er the bourn, Bessy, to me.

Fool. Her boat hath a leak,

And she must not speak

Why she dares not come over to thee.

Edg. The foul fiend haunts poor Tom in the
voice of a nightingale. Hoppedance cries in
Tom's belly for two white* herring. Croak ^{[fresh}
not, black angel; I have no food for thee.

Kent. How do you, sir? Stand you not so
amazed:

Will you lie down and rest upon the cushions?

Lear. I'll see their trial first. Bring in the
evidence.

[*To Edgar*] Thou robed man of justice, take thy
place;

[*To the Fool*] And thou, his yoke-fellow of
equity,

Bench by his side. [*To Kent*] You are o' the
commission,

Sit you too.

Edg. Let us deal justly.

Sleepest or wakest thou, jolly shepherd?

Thy sheep be in the corn;

And for one blast of thy minikin mouth,*

Thy sheep shall take no harm.

[pretty

Pur! the cat is gray.

Lear. Arraign her first; 'tis Goneril. I here
take my oath before this honourable assembly,
she kicked the poor king her father.

Fool. Come hither, mistress. Is your name
Goneril?

Lear. She cannot deny it.

Act III Scene 6

Fool. Cry you mercy, I took you for a joint-stool.*

[folding-stool]

Lear. And here's another, whose warp'd looks proclaim

What store her heart is made on. Stop her there!

Arms, arms, sword, fire! Corruption in the place!

False justicer, why hast thou let her scape?

Edg. Bless thy five wits!

Kent. O pity! Sir, where is the patience now, That you so oft have boasted to retain?

Edg. [Aside] My tears begin to take his part so much,

They'll mar my counterfeiting.

Lear. The little dogs and all,

Tray, Blanch, and Sweet-heart, see, they bark at me.

Edg. Tom will throw his head at them.

Avaunt, you curs!

Be thy mouth or black or white,

Tooth that poisons if it bite;

Mastiff, greyhound, mongrel grim,

Hound or spaniel, brach or lym,* [blood-hound]

Or hobtail tike or trundle-tail,* [curly tailed]

Tom will make them weep and wail:

For, with throwing thus my head, [half door]

Dogs leap the hatch,* and all are fled.

Do de, de, de. Sessa! Come, march to wakes and fairs and market-towns. Poor Tom, thy horn is dry.

Lear. Then let them anatomize Regan; see what breeds about her heart. Is there any cause in nature that makes these hard hearts? [To Edgar] You, sir, I entertain for one of my hundred; only I do not like the fashion of your

King Lear

garments. You will say they are Persian attire; but let them be changed.

Kent. Now, good my lord, lie here and rest awhile.

Lear. Make no noise, make no noise; draw the curtains: so, so, so. We'll go to supper i' the morning. So, so, so.

Fool. And I'll go to bed at noon.

Re-enter Gloucester.

Glou. Come hither, friend: where is the king my master?

Kent. Here, sir; but trouble him not, his wits are gone.

Glou. Good friend, I prithee, take him in thy arms;

I have o'erheard a plot of death upon him:

There is a litter ready; lay him in't,

And drive toward Dover, friend, where thou shalt meet

Both welcome and protection. Take up thy master:

If thou shouldst dally half an hour, his life,

With thine and all that offer to defend him,

Stand in assured loss. Take up, take up;

And follow me, that will to some provision

Give thee quick conduct.

Kent. Oppressed nature sleeps:

This rest might yet have balm'd thy broken sinews,

Which, if convenience will not allow,

Stand in hard cure. [*To the Fool*] Come, help to bear thy master;

Thou must not stay behind.

Glou.

Come, come, away.

[*Exeunt all but Edgar.*]

Act III Scene 7

Edg. When we our betters see bearing our
woes,
We scarcely think our miseries our foes.
Who alone suffers suffers most i' the mind,
Leaving free things and happy shows behind :
But then the mind much sufferance doth o'erskip,
When grief hath mates, and bearing* [suffering
fellowship.
How light and portable my pain seems now,
When that which makes me bend makes the
king bow,
He childed as I father'd ! Tom, away !
Mark the high noises, and thyself bewray,
When false opinion, whose wrong thought
defiles thee,
In thy just proof repeals and reconciles thee.
What will hap more to-night, safe scape the
king !
Lurk, lurk. [Exit.

SCENE 7.—Gloucester's Castle.

*Enter Cornwall, Regan, Goneril, Edmund,
and Servants.*

Corn. Post speedily to my lord your husband ;
show him this letter : the army of France is
landed. Seek out the villain Gloucester.

[Exeunt some of the Servants.]

Reg. Hang him instantly.

Gon. Pluck out his eyes.

Corn. Leave him to my displeasure. Edmund,
keep you our sister company : the revenges we
are bound to take upon your traitorous father
are not fit for your beholding. Advise the duke,
where you are going, to a most festinate pre-
paration : we are bound to the like. Our posts

King Lear

shall be swift and intelligent betwixt us. Farewell, dear sister: farewell, my lord of Gloucester.

Enter Oswald.

How now! where's the king?

Osw. My lord of Gloucester hath convey'd him hence:

Some five or six and thirty of his knights,
Hot questrists* after him, met him at gate; inquirers
Who, with some other of the lords dependants,
Are gone with him toward Dover; where they
boast

To have well-armed friends.

Corn. Get horses for your mistress.

Gon. Farewell, sweet lord, and sister.

Corn. Edmund, farewell.

[Exeunt Goneril, Edmund, and Oswald.]

Go seek the traitor Gloucester,
Pinion him like a thief, bring him before us.

[Exeunt other Servants.]

Though well we may not pass upon his life
Without the form of justice, yet our power
Shall do a courtesy to* our wrath, [bend, yield to]
which men

May blame but not control. Who's there? the
traitor?

Enter Gloucester, brought in by two or three.

Reg. Ingrateful fox! 'tis he.

Corn. Bind fast his corky* arms. [withered]

Glou. What mean your graces? Good my
friends, consider

You are my guests: do me no foul play, friends.

Corn. Bind him, I say. *[Servants bind him.]*

Reg. Hard, hard. O filthy traitor!

Glou. Unmerciful lady as you are, I'm none.

Act III Scene 7

Corn. To this chair bind him. Villain, thou shalt find— [*Regan plucks his beard.*]

Glou. By the kind gods, 'tis most ignobly done
To pluck me by the beard.

Reg. So white, and such a traitor!

Glou. Naughtly lady,
These hairs, which thou dost ravish from my chin,

Will quicken, and accuse thee: I am your host:
With robbers' hands my hospitable favours
You should not ruffle thus. What will you do?

Corn. Come, sir, what letters had you late
from France?

Reg. Be simple answerer, for we know the
truth.

Corn. And what confederacy have you with
the traitors
Late footed in the kingdom?

Reg. To whose hands have you sent the lunatic
king?
Speak.

Glou. I have a letter guessingly set down,
Which came from one that's of a neutral heart,
And not from one opposed.

Corn. Cunning.

Reg. And false.

Corn. Where hast thou sent the king?

Glou. To Dover.

Reg. Wherefore to Dover? Wast thou not
charged at peril—

Corn. Wherefore to Dover? Let him first
answer that.

Glou. I am tied to the stake, and I must stand
the course.

Reg. Wherefore to Dover, sir?

Glou. Because I would not see thy cruel nails

King Lear

Pluck out his poor old eyes, nor thy fierce sister
In his anointed flesh stick boarish fangs.

The sea, with such a storm as his bare head
In hell-black night endured, would have buoy'd
up,

And quench'd the stelled* fires : [starry

Yet, poor old heart, he help the heavens to rain;

If wolves had at thy gate howl'd that stern time,

Thou shouldst have said, 'Good porter, turn the
key,

All cruels else subscribe'*: but I shall see [give up
The winged vengeance overtake such children.

Corn. See't shalt thou never. Fellows, hold
the chair.

Upon these eyes of thine I'll set my foot.

Glou. He that will think to live till he be old,
Give me some help! O cruel! O you gods!

Reg. One side will mock another; the other too.

Corn. If you see vengeance—

1st Serv. Hold your hand, my lord :
I have served you ever since I was a child ;
But better service have I never done you
Than now to bid you hold.

Reg. How now, you dog!

1st Serv. If you did wear a beard upon your
chin,
I'd shake it on this quarrel. What do you
mean?

Corn. My villain! [*They draw and fight.*

1st Serv. Nay, then, come on, and take the
chance of anger.

Reg. Give me thy sword. A peasant stand up
thus!

[*Takes a sword, and runs at him behind.*

1st Serv. O, I am slain! My lord, you have
one eye left

Act III Scene 7

To see some mischief on him. O! [Dies.

Corn. Lest it seemore, prevent it. Out, vile jelly!
Where is thy lustre now?

Glou. All dark and comfortless. Where's my
son Edmund?

Edmund, enkindle all the sparks of nature,
To quit* this horrid act. [requite

Reg. Out, treacherous villain!
Thou call'st on him that hates thee: it was he
That made the overture* of thy treasons [discovery
to us;

Who is too good to pity thee.

Glou. O my follies! then Edgar was abused.
Kind gods, forgive me that, and prosper him!

Reg. Go thrust him out at gates, and let him
smell

His way to Dover. [*Exit one with Gloucester.*]

How is't, my lord? how look you?

Corn. I have received a hurt: follow me, lady.
Turn out that eyeless villain; throw this slave
Upon the dunghill. Regan, I bleed apace:
Untimely comes this hurt: give me your arm.

[*Exit Cornwall, led by Regan.*]

2nd Serv. I'll never care what wickedness I do,
If this man come to good.

3rd Serv. If she live long,
And in the end meet the old course of death,
Women will all turn monsters.

2nd Serv. Let's follow the old earl, and get
the Bedlam* [madman
To lead him where he would: his roguish madness
Allows itself to any thing.

3rd Serv. Go thou: I'll fetch some flax and
whites of eggs
To apply to his bleeding face. Now, heaven
help him! [*Exeunt severally.*]

King Lear

ACT IV.

SCENE 1.—The Heath.

Enter Edgar.

Edg. Yet better thus, and known to be contempt'n'd,

Than still contempt'n'd and flatter'd. To be worst,
The lowest and most dejected thing of fortune,
Stands still in esperance, lives not in fear :

The lamentable change is from the best ;
The worst returns to laughter. Welcome, then,
Thou unsubstantial air that I embrace !

The wretch that thou hast blown unto the
worst

Owes nothing to thy blasts. But who comes
here ?

Enter Gloucester, led by an Old Man.

My father, poorly led ? World, world, O world !
But that thy strange mutations make us hate
thee,

Life would not yield to age.

Old Man. O, my good lord, I have been your
tenant, and your father's tenant, these four-
score years.

Glou. Away, get thee away ; good friend, be
gone :

Thy comforts can do me no good at all ;
Thee they may hurt.

Old Man. Alack, sir, you cannot see your way.

Glou. I have no way, and therefore want no
eyes ;

I stumbled when I saw : full oft 'tis seen,
Our means secure us, and our mere defects
Prove our commodities. Oh dear son Edgar,
The food of thy abused father's wrath !

Act IV Scene 1

Might I but live to see thee in my touch,
I'd say I had eyes again!

Old Man. How now! Who's there?

Edg. [Aside] O gods! Who is't can say 'I
am at the worst'?

I am worse than e'er I was.

Old Man. 'Tis poor mad Tom.

Edg. [Aside] And worse I may be yet: the
worst is not

So long as we can say 'This is the worst.'

Old Man. Fellow, where goest?

Glou. Is it a beggar-man?

Old Man. Madman and beggar too.

Glou. He has some reason, else he could not
beg.

I' the last night's storm I such a fellow saw,
Which made me think a man a worm: my son
Came then into my mind, and yet my mind
Was then scarce friends with him: I have
heard more since.

As flies to wanton boys, are we to the gods;
They kill us for their sport.

Edg. [Aside] How should this be?
Bad is the trade that must play fool to sorrow,
Angering itself and others.—Bless thee, master!

Glou. Is that the naked fellow?

Old Man. Ay, my lord.

Glou. Then, prithee, get thee gone: if for
my sake

Thou wilt o'ertake us, hence a mile or twain,
I' the way toward Dover, do it for ancient love;
And bring some covering for this naked soul,
Who I'll entreat to lead me.

Old Man. Alack, sir, he is mad.

Glou. 'Tis the times' plague, when madmen
lead the blind.

King Lear

Do as I bid thee, or rather do thy pleasure ;
Above the rest, be gone.

Old Man. I'll bring him the best 'parel that I
have,

Come on 't what will. [Exit.

Glou. Sirrah, naked fellow,—

Edg. Poor Tom's a-cold. [*Aside*] I cannot
daub* it further. [disguise

Glou. Come hither, fellow.

Edg. [*Aside*] And yet I must.—Bless thy
sweet eyes, they bleed.

Glou. Know'st thou the way to Dover?

Edg. Both stile and gate, horse-way and foot-
path. Poor Tom hath been scared out of his
good wits. Bless thee, good man's son, from
the foul fiend! Five fiends have been in poor
Tom at once; of lust, as Obidicut; Hobbidi-
dence, prince of dumbness; Mahu, of stealing;
Modo, of murder; Flibbertigibbet, of mopping
and mowing, who since possesses chambermaids
and waiting-women. So, bless thee, master!

Glou. Here, take this purse, thou whom the
heaven's plagues
Have humbled to all strokes: that I am wretched
Makes thee the happier. Heavens, deal so still!
Let the superfluous and lust-dieted man,
That slaves your ordinance,* that [i.e. braves your law
will not see

Because he doth not feel, feel your power
quickly;

So distribution should undo excess,
And each man have enough. Dost thou know
Dover?

Edg. Ay, master.

Glou. There is a cliff whose high and bending
head

Act IV Scene 2

Looks fearfully in the confined deep :
Bring me but to the very brim of it,
And I'll repair the misery thou dost bear
With something rich about me : from that place
I shall no leading need.

Edg. Give me thy arm :
Poor Tom shall lead thee. *[Exeunt.]*

SCENE 2.—Before the Duke of Albany's Palace.

Enter Goneril and Edmund.

Gon. Welcome, my lord : I marvel our mild
husband
Not met us on the way.

Enter Oswald.

Now, where's your master ?

Osw. Madam, within ; but never man so
changed.

I told him of the army that was landed ;
He smiled at it : I told him you were coming ;
His answer was, 'The worse' : of Gloucester's
treachery,
And of the loyal service of his son,
When I inform'd him, then he call'd me sot,
And told me I had turn'd the wrong side out :
What most he should dislike seems pleasant to
him ;
What like, offensive.

Gon. *[To Edm.]* Then shall you go no
further.

It is the cowish* terror of his spirit, *[cowardly]*
That dares not undertake : he'll not feel wrongs
Which tie him to an answer. Our wishes on
the way

May prove effects. Back, Edmund, to my
brother ;

King Lear

Hasten his musters and conduct his powers :
I must change arms at home, and give the distaff
Into my husband's hands. This trusty servant
Shall pass between us : ere long you are like to
hear,

If you dare venture in your own behalf,
A mistress's command. Wear this ; spare speech ;
[*Giving a favour.*

Decline your head : this kiss, if it durst speak,
Would stretch thy spirits up into the air :
Conceive, and fare thee well.

Edm. Yours in the ranks of death.

Gon. My most dear Gloucester !
[*Exit Edmund.*

O, the difference of man and man !
To thee a woman's services are due :
My fool usurps my body.

Osw. Madam, here comes my lord. [*Exit.*

Enter Albany.

Gon. I have been worth the whistle.

Alb. O Goneril
You are not worth the dust which the rude wind
Blows in your face. I fear your disposition :
That nature which contemns it origin
Cannot be border'd certain in itself ;
She that herself will sliver and disbranch
From her material sap, perforce must wither
And come to deadly use.

Gon. No more ; the text is foolish.

Alb. Wisdom and goodness to the vile seem
vile :
Filths savour but themselves. What have you
done ?
Tigers, not daughters, what have you perform'd ?
A father, and a gracious aged man,

Act IV Scene 2

Whose reverence even the head-lugg'd bear
would lick,

Most barbarous, most degenerate! have you
madded.

Could my good brother suffer you to do it?

A man, a prince, by him so benefited!

If that the heavens do not their visible spirits

Send quickly down to tame these vile offences,

It will come,

Humanity must perforce prey on itself,

Like monsters of the deep.

Gon.

Milk-liver'd man!

That bear'st a cheek for blows, a head for
wrongs;

Who hast not in thy brows an eye discerning

Thine honour from thy suffering; that not
know'st

Fools do those villains pity who are punish'd

Ere they have done their mischief. Where's
thy drum?

France spreads his banners in our noiseless land,

With plumed helm thy state begins to threat;

Whiles thou, a moral fool, sit'st still and criest

'Alack, why does he so?'

Alb.

See thyself, devil!

Proper deformity seems not in the fiend

So horrid as in woman.

Gon.

O vain fool!

Alb. Thou changed and self-cover'd thing, for
shame,

Be-monster not thy feature. Were't my fitness

To let these hands obey my blood,

They are apt enough to dislocate and tear

Thy flesh and bones: howe'er thou art a fiend,

A woman's shape doth shield thee,

Gon. Marry, your manhood mew,*— [mew up

King Lear

Enter a Messenger.

Alb. What news?

Mess. O, my good lord, the Duke of Cornwall's dead;

Slain by his servant, going to put out
The other eye of Gloucester.

Alb. Gloucester's eyes!

Mess. A servant that he bred, thrill'd with
remorse,

Opposed against the act, bending his sword
To his great master; who, thereat enraged,
Flew on him, and amongst them fell'd him dead;
But not without that harmful stroke, which
since

Hath pluck'd him after.

Alb. This shows you are above,
You justicers, that these our nether crimes
So speedily can venge! But, O poor Gloucester!
Lost he his other eye?

Mess. Both, both, my lord.
This letter, madam, craves a speedy answer;
'Tis from your sister.

Gon. [*Aside*] One way I like this well;
But being widow, and my Gloucester with her,
May all the building in my fancy pluck
Upon my hateful life: another way,
The news is not so tart.—I'll read, and answer.

[*Exit.*]

Alb. Where was his son when they did take
his eyes?

Mess. Come with my lady hither.

Alb. He is not here.

Mess. No, my good lord; I met him back again.

Alb. Knows he the wickedness?

Mess. Ay, my good lord; 'twas he inform'd
against him;

Act IV Scene 3

And quit the house on purpose, that their
punishment
Might have the freer course.

Alb. Gloucester, I live
To thank thee for the love thou show'dst the
king,
And to revenge thine eyes. Come hither, friend:
Tell me what more thou know'st. [*Exeunt.*]

SCENE 3.—The French Camp near Dover.

Enter Kent and a Gentleman.

Kent. Why the King of France is so suddenly
gone back know you the reason?

Gent. Something he left imperfect in the
state, which since his coming forth is thought
of; which imports to the kingdom so much fear
and danger, that his personal return was most
required and necessary.

Kent. Who hath he left behind him general?

Gent. The marshal of France, Monsieur La
Far.

Kent. Did your letters pierce the queen to
any demonstration of grief?

Gent. Ay, sir; she took them, read them in
my presence;

And now and then an ample tear trill'd down
Her delicate cheek: it seem'd she was a queen
Over her passion; who, most rebel like,
Sought to be king o'er her.

Kent. O, then it moved her.

Gent. Not to a rage: patience and sorrow
strove

Who should express her goodliest. You have
seen

Sunshine and rain at once: her smiles and tears

King Lear

Were like a better way : those happy smilets,
That play'd on her ripe lip, seem'd not to know
What guests were in her eyes ; which parted
thence,

As pearls from diamonds dropp'd. In brief,
Sorrow would be a rarity most beloved,
If all could so become it.

Kent. Made she no verbal question ?

Gent. Faith, once or twice she heaved the
name of ' father '

Pantingly forth, as if it press'd her heart ;
Cried ' Sisters ! sisters ! Shame of ladies ! sisters !
Kent ! father ! sisters ! What, i' the storm ? i'
the night ?

Let pity not be believed ! ' There she shook
The holy water from her heavenly eyes,
And clamour moisten'd * : [moistened clamour with her tears
then away she started

To deal with grief alone.

Kent. It is the stars,

The stars above us, govern our conditions ;
Else one self mate and mate could not beget
Such different issues. You spoke not with her
since ?

Gent. No.

Kent. Was this before the king return'd ?

Gent. No, since.

Kent. Well, sir, the poor distress'd Lear's i'
the town ;

Who sometime in his better tune remembers
What we are come about, and by no means
Will yield to see his daughter.

Gent. Why, good sir ?

Kent. A sovereign shame so elbows him : his
own unkindness,

That stripp'd her from his benediction, turn'd her

Act IV Scene 4

To foreign casualties, gave her dear rights
To his dog-hearted daughters, these things sting
His mind so venomously, that burning shame
Detains him from Cordelia.

Gent. Alack, poor gentleman!

Kent. Of Albany's and Cornwall's powers you
heard not?

Gent. 'Tis so, they are afoot.

Kent. Well, sir, I'll bring you to our master
Lear,

And leave you to attend him : some dear cause
Will in concealment wrap me up awhile ;
When I am known aright, you shall not grieve
Lending me this acquaintance. I pray you, go
Along with me. *[Exeunt.]*

SCENE 4.—The Same. A Tent.

*Enter, with drum and colours, Cordelia,
Doctor, and Soldiers.*

Cor. Alack, 'tis he: why, he was met even now
As mad as the vex'd sea; singing aloud;
Crown'd with rank fumiter and furrow-weeds,
With burdocks, hemlock, nettles, cuckoo-
flowers,

Darnel, and all the idle weeds that grow
In our sustaining corn. A century send forth;
Search every acre in the high-grown field,
And bring him to our eye. *[Exit an Officer.]*

What can man's wisdom
In the restoring his hereaved sense?
He that helps him take all my outward worth.

Doct. There is means, madam :
Our foster-nurse of nature is repose,
The which he lacks; that to provoke in him,
Are many simples operative, whose power

King Lear

Will close the eye of anguish.

Cor. All blest secrets,
All you unpublish'd virtues of the earth,
Spring with my tears! be aidant and remediate
In the good man's distress! Seek, seek for him;
Lest his ungovern'd rage dissolve the life
That wants the means to lead it.

Enter a Messenger.

Mess. News, madam;
The British powers are marching hitherward.

Cor. 'Tis known before; our preparation stands
In expectation of them. O dear father,
It is thy business that I go about;
Therefore great France
My mourning and important* tears *importunate*
hath pitied.

No blown ambition doth our arms incite,
But love, dear love, and our aged father's right:
Soon may I hear and see him! [*Exeunt.*

SCENE 5.—Gloucester's Castle.

Enter Regan and Oswald.

Reg. But are my brother's powers set forth?

Osw. Ay, madam.

Reg. Himself in person there?

Osw. Madam, with much ado:
Your sister is the better soldier.

Reg. Lord Edmund spake not with your lord
at home?

Osw. No, madam.

Reg. What might import my sister's letter to
him?

Osw. I know not, lady.

Reg. Faith, he is posted hence on serious
matter.

Act IV Scene 5

It was great ignorance, Gloucester's eyes being
out,

To let him live : where he arrives he moves
All hearts against us : Edmund, I think, is gone,
In pity of his misery, to dispatch
His nighted life ; moreover, to descry
The strength o' the enemy.

Osw. I must needs after him, madam, with
my letter.

Reg. Our troops set forth to-morrow : stay
with us ;

The ways are dangerous.

Osw. I may not, madam :
My lady charged my duty in this business.

Reg. Why should she write to Edmund ?
Might not you

Transport her purposes by word ? Belike,
Something—I know not what : I'll love thee
much,

Let me unseal the letter.

Osw. Madam, I had rather—

Reg. I know your lady does not love her hus-
band ;

I am sure of that : and at her late being here
She gave strange œillades* and most speak- [ogles
ing looks

To noble Edmund. I know you are of her
bosom.*

[in her confidence

Osw. I, madam ?

Reg. I speak in understanding ; you are, I
know't ;

Therefore I do advise you, take this note :
My lord is dead ; Edmund and I have talk'd ;
And more convenient is he for my hand
Than for your lady's ; you may gather more.
If you do find him, pray you, give him this :

King Lear

And when your mistress hears thus much from
you,

I pray, desire her call her wisdom to her.

So, fare you well.

If you do chance to hear of that blind traitor,

Preferment falls on him that cuts him off.

Osw. Would I could meet him, madam! I
should show

What party I do follow.

Reg.

Fare thee well. [*Exeunt.*]

SCENE 6.—Fields near Dover.

*Enter Gloucester, and Edgar dressed like
a peasant.*

Glou. When shall we come to the top of that
same hill?

Edg. You do climb up it now: look, how we
labour.

Glou. Methinks the ground is even.

Edg. Horrible steep.

Hark, do you hear the sea?

Glou. No, truly.

Edg. Why, then, your other senses grow im-
perfect

By your eyes' anguish.

Glou. So may it be indeed:

Methinks thy voice is alter'd; and thou speak'st
In better phrase and matter than thou didst.

Edg. You're much deceived; in nothing am I
changed

But in my garments.

Glou. Methinks you're better spoken.

Edg. Come on, sir; here's the place: stand
still. How fearful

And dizzy 'tis to cast one's eyes so low!

Act IV Scene 6

The crows and choughs that wing the midway air
Show scarce so gross as beetles: half way down
Hangs one that gathers samphire, dreadful
trade!

Methinks he seems no bigger than his head :
The fishermen, that walk upon the beach,
Appear like mice ; and yond tall anchoring bark,
Diminish'd to her cock * ; her cock, a buoy [cock-boat]
Almost too small for sight : the murmuring
surge,

That on the unnumber'd idle pebbles chafes,
Cannot be heard so high. I'll look no more;
Lest my brain turn, and the deficient sight
Topple down headlong.

Glou. Set me where you stand.

Edg. Give me your hand: you are now within a foot

Of the extreme verge : for all beneath the moon
Would I not leap upright.

Glou. Let go my hand.

Here, friend, 's another purse ; in it a jewel
Well worth a poor man's taking : fairies and
gods

Prosper it with thee! Go thou farther off;
Bid me farewell, and let me hear thee going.

Edg. Now fare you well, good sir.

Glou. With all my heart.

Edg. Why I do trifle thus with his despair
Is done to cure it.

Glou. [*Kneeling*] O you mighty gods!
This world I do renounce, and, in your sights,
Shake patiently my great affliction off:
If I could bear it longer, and not fall
To quarrel with your great opposeless wills,
My snuff and loathed part of nature should
Burn itself out. If Edgar live, O bless him!

King Lear

Now, fellow, fare thee well. [*He falls forward.*]

Edg. Gone, sir : farewell.

And yet I know not how conceit may rob
The treasury of life, when life itself
Yields to the theft : had he been where he
thought,

By this had thought been past. Alive or dead ?
Ho, you sir ! friend ! Hear you, sir ! speak !
Thus might he pass indeed : yet he revives.
What are you, sir ?

Glou. Away, and let me die.

Edg. Hadst thou been aught but gossamer,
feathers, air,
So many fathom down precipitating,
Thou'dst shiver'd like an egg : but thou dost
breathe ;
Hast heavy substance ; bleed'st not ; speak'st ;
art sound.

Ten masts at each make not the altitude
Which thou hast perpendicularly fell :
Thy life's a miracle. Speak yet again.

Glou. But have I fall'n, or no ?

Edg. From the dread summit of this chalky
bourn.

Look up a-height ; the shrill-gorged lark so far
Cannot be seen or heard : do but look up.

Glou. Alack, I have no eyes.

Is wretchedness deprived that benefit,
To end itself by death ? 'Twas yet some comfort,
When misery could beguile the tyrant's rage,
And frustrate his proud will.

Edg. Give me your arm :

Up : so. How is't ? Feel you your legs ? You
stand.

Glou. Too well, too well.

Edg. This is above all strangeness.

Act IV Scene 6

Upon the crown o' the cliff, what thing was that
Which parted from you?

Glou. A poor unfortunate beggar.

Edg. As I stood here below methought his eyes
Were two full moons; he had a thousand noses,
Horns whelk'd and waved like the enraged sea:
It was some fiend; therefore, thou happy father,
Think that the clearest gods, who make them
honours

Of men's impossibilities, have preserved thee.

Glou. I do remember now: henceforth I'll bear
Affliction till it do cry out itself

'Enough, enough,' and die. That thing you
speak of,

I took it for a man; often 'twould say

'The fiend, the fiend;' he led me to that place.

Edg. Bear free and patient thoughts. But
who comes here?

*Enter Lear, fantastically dressed with wild
flowers.*

The safer sense will ne'er accommodate
His master thus.

Lear. No, they cannot touch me for coining;
I am the king himself.

Edg. O thou side-piercing sight!

Lear. Nature's above art in that respect.
There's your press-money. That fellow handles
his bow like a crow-keeper: draw me a clothier's
yard. Look, look, a mouse! Peace, peace; this
piece of toasted cheese will do't. There's my
gauntlet: I'll prove it on a giant. Bring up the
brown bills.* O, well flown, bird! i' the [halberds
clout,* i' the clout: hewgh! Give [centre pin of target
the word.

Edg. Sweet marjoram.

King Lear

Lear. Pass.

Glou. I know that voice.

Lear. Ha! Goneril, with a white beard! They flattered me like a dog; and told me I had white hairs in my beard ere the black ones were there. To say 'ay' and 'no' to every thing that I said! 'Ay' and 'no' too was no good divinity. When the rain came to wet me once, and the wind to make me chatter; when the thunder would not peace at my bidding; there I found 'em, there I smelt 'em out. Go to, they are not men o' their words: they told me I was every thing; 'tis a lie, I am not ague-proof.

Glou. The trick of that voice I do well remember:
Is't not the king?

Lear. Ay, every inch a king:
When I do stare, see how the subject quakes.—
I pardon that man's life.—What was thy cause?
Adultery?

Thou shalt not die; die for adultery? No;
The wren goes to 't, and the small gilded fly
Does lecher in my sight.

Let copulation thrive; for Gloucester's bastard
son

Was kinder to his father than my daughters
Got 'tween the lawful sheets.

To 't, luxury, pell-mell! for I lack soldiers.

Behold yon simpering dame,

Whose face between her forks presages snow,
That minces virtue, and does shake her head

To hear of pleasure's name,—

[pole-cat

The fitchew,* nor the soiled horse, goes to 't

With a more riotous appetite.

Down from the waist they are Centaurs,

Act IV Scene 6

Though women all above ;
But to the girdle do the gods inherit,
Beneath is all the fiends' ;
There's hell, there's darkness, there's the
sulphurous pit,
Burning, scalding, stench, consumption ; fie,
fie, fie ! pah, pah !—

Give me an ounce of civet, good apothecary, to
sweeten my imagination : there's money for thee.

Glou. O, let me kiss that hand !

Lear. Let me wipe it first ; it smells of
mortality.

Glou. O ruin'd piece of nature ! This great
world

Shall so wear out to nought. Dost thou know
me ?

Lear. I remember thine eyes well enough.
Dost thou squiny* at me ? No, do thy [squint
worst, blind Cupid ; I'll not love. Read thou
this challenge ; mark but the penning on't.

Glou. Were all the letters suns, I could not
see one.

Edg. I would not take this from report ; it is,
And my heart breaks at it.

Lear. Read.

Glou. What, with the case* of eyes ? [socket

Lear. O, ho, are you there with me ? No eyes
in your head, nor no money in your purse ?
Your eyes are in a heavy case, your purse in a
light : yet you see how this world goes.

Glou. I see it feelingly.

Lear. What, art mad ? A man may see how
this world goes with no eyes. Look with thine
ears : see how yond justice rails upon yond
simple thief. Hark, in thine ear : change
places ; and, handy-dandy, which is the justice,

King Lear

which is the thief? Thou hast seen a farmer's dog bark at a beggar?

Glou. Ay, sir.

Lear. And the creature run from the cur? There thou mightst behold the great image of authority: a dog's obeyed in office.

Thou rascal beadle, hold thy bloody hand!

Why dost thou lash that whore? Strip thine own back;

Thou hotly lust'st to use her in that kind

For which thou whippst her. The usurer hangs the cozener.

Through tatter'd clothes small vices do appear;
Robes and furr'd gowns hide all. Plate sin with gold,

And the strong lance of justice hurtless breaks;
Arm it in rags, a pigmy's straw does pierce it.

None does offend, none, I say, none; I'll able 'em:

Take that of me, my friend, who have the power

To seal the accuser's lips. Get thee glass eyes;

And, like a scurvy politician, seem

To see the things thou dost not.

Now, now, now, now: pull off my boots: harder, harder: so.

Edg. O, matter and impertinency mix'd!

Reason in madness!

Lear. If thou wilt weep my fortunes, take my eyes.

I know thee well enough; thy name is Gloucester:

Thou must be patient; we came crying hither:

Thou know'st, the first time that we smell the air,

We wawl and cry. I will preach to thee: mark.

Glou. Alack, alack the day!

Lear. When we are born, we cry that we are
come

[?hat

To this great stage of fools. This' a good block*;

Act IV Scene 6

It were a delicate stratagem, to shoe
A troop of horse with felt ; I'll put 't in proof ;
And when I have stol'n upon these sons-in-law,
Then, kill, kill, kill, kill, kill, kill !

Enter a Gentleman, with Attendants.

Gent. O, here he is : lay hand upon him. Sir,
Your most dear daughter—

Lear. No rescue? What, a prisoner? I am even
The natural fool of fortune. Use me well ;
You shall have ransom. Let me have surgeons ;
I am cut to the brains.

Gent. You shall have any thing.

Lear. No seconds? all myself?
Why, this would make a man a man of salt,
To use his eyes for garden water-pots,
Ay, and laying autumn's dust.

Gent. Good sir,—

Lear. I will die bravely, like a smug bride-
groom. What!
I will be jovial : come, come ; I am a king,
My masters, know you that.

Gent. You are a royal one, and we obey you.

Lear. Then there's life in't. Nay, if you get
it, you shall get it with running. Sa, sa, sa, sa.

[Exit running ; Attendants follow.]

Gent. A sight most pitiful in the meanest wretch,
Past speaking of in a king ! Thou hast one
daughter,

Who redeems nature from the general curse
Which twain have brought her to.

Edg. Hail, gentle sir.

Gent. Sir, speed you : what's your will?

Edg. Do you hear aught, sir, of a battle toward?

Gent. Most sure and vulgar : every one hears
that,

King Lear

Which can distinguish sound.

Edg. But, by your favour,
How near's the other army?

Gent. Near and on speedy foot; the main descry
Stands on the hourly thought.

Edg. I thank you, sir: that's all.

Gent. Though that the queen on special cause
is here,

Her army is moved on.

Edg. I thank you, sir. [*Exit Gent.*]

Glou. You ever-gentle gods, take my breath
from me;

Let not my worser spirit tempt me again
To die before you please

Edg. Well pray you, father.

Glou. Now, good sir, what are you?

Edg. A most poor man, made tame to fortune's
blows;

Who, by the art of known and feeling sorrows,
Am pregnant* to good pity. Give me [*disposed*
your hand,

I'll lead you to some bidding.

Glou. Hearty thanks:

The bounty and the benison of heaven
To boot, and boot!

Enter Oswald.

Osw. A proclaim'd prize! Most happy!
That eyeless head of thine was first framed flesh
To raise my fortunes. Thou old unhappy traitor,
Briefly thyself remember: the sword is out
That must destroy thee.

Glou. Now let thy friendly hand
Put strength enough to't. [*Edgar interposes.*]

Osw. Wherefore, bold peasant,
Darest thou support a publish'd traitor? Hence!

Act IV Scene 6

Lest that the infection of his fortune take
Like hold on thee. Let go his arm.

Edg. Chill* not let go, zir, without vurther ^[I'll]
'casion.

Osw. Let go, slave, or thou diest!

Edg. Good gentleman, go your gait, and let
poor volk pass. An chud ha' bin* ^[I should have been]
zwaggered out of my life, 'twould not ha' bin zo
long as 'tis by a vortnight. Nay, come not near
th' old man; keep out, che vor ye,* or ise ^[I warn you]
try whether your costard or my ballow* be ^[cudgel]
the harder: chill be plain with you.

Osw. Out, dunghill! *[They fight.]*

Edg. Chill pick your teeth, zir: come; no
matter vor your foins.* *[Oswald falls.]* ^[thrusts]

Osw. Slave, thou hast slain me. Villain, take
my purse:

If ever thou wilt thrive, bury my body;
And give the letters which thou find'st about me
To Edmund earl of Gloucester; seek him out
Upon the British party: O, untimely death!
Death! *[Dies.]*

Edg. I know thee well: a serviceable villain;
As duteous to the vices of thy mistress
As badness would desire.

Glou. What, is he dead?

Edg. Sit you down, father; rest you.
Let's see these pockets: the letters that he
speaks of
May be my friends. He's dead; I am only sorry
He had no other deathsmen.* Let us see: ^[executioner]
Leave, gentle wax; and, manners, blame us not:
To know our enemies' minds, we'd rip their
hearts;
Their papers, is more lawful.

[Reads] 'Let our reciprocal vows be remem-

King Lear

bered. You have many opportunities to cut him off : if your will want not, time and place will be fruitfully offered. There is nothing done, if he return the conqueror : then am I the prisoner, and his bed my gaol ; from the loathed warmth whereof deliver me, and supply the place for your labour.

‘ Your—wife, so I would say—affectionate servant,
GONERIL.’

O indistinguish’d space of woman’s will !
A plot upon her virtuous husband’s life ;
And the exchange my brother ! Here, in the
sands,

Thee I’ll rake up,* the post unsanctified [cover up
Of murderous lechers : and in the mature time
With this ungracious paper strike the sight
Of the death-practised* duke : for him ’tis well
That of thy death and business I can tell. [plotted

Glou. The king is mad : how stiff is my vile
sense, [sensitive

That I stand up, and have ingenious* feeling
Of my huge sorrows ! Better I were distract :
So should my thoughts be sever’d from my griefs,
And woes by wrong imaginations lose
The knowledge of themselves. [*Drum afar off.*

Edg. Give me your hand :

Far off, methinks, I hear the beaten drum :
Come, father, I’ll bestow you with a friend.

[*Exeunt.*

SCENE 7.—A Tent in the French camp. Lear on a bed asleep, soft music playing ; Gentleman, and others attending.

Enter Cordelia, Kent, and Doctor.

Cor. O thou good Kent, how shall I live and work,

Act IV Scene 7

To match thy goodness? My life will be too short,

And every measure fail me.

Kent. To be acknowledged, madam, is o'er-paid.

All my reports go with the modest truth ;

Nor more nor clipp'd, but so.

Cor. Be better suited :

These weeds are memories of those worser hours :

I prithee, put them off.

Kent. Pardon me, dear madam ;

Yet to be known shortens my made intent :

My boon I make it, that you know me not

Till time and I think meet.

Cor. Then be't so, my good lord. [*To the Doctor*] How does the king?

Doct. Madam, sleeps still.

Cor. O you kind gods,

Cure this great breach in his abused nature !

The untuned and jarring senses, O, wind up

Of this child-changed father !

Doct. So please your majesty

That we may wake the king : he hath slept long.

Cor. Be govern'd by your knowledge, and proceed

I' the sway of your own will. Is he array'd ?

Gent. Ay, madam ; in the heaviness of his sleep

We put fresh garments on him.

Doct. Be by, good madam, when we do awake him ;

I doubt not of his temperance.

Cor. Very well.

Doct. Please you, draw near. Louder the music there !

Cor. O my dear father ! Restoration hang

Thy medicine on my lips ; and let this kiss

King Lear

Repair those violent harms that my two sisters
Have in thy reverence made!

Kent. Kind and dear princess!

Cor. Had you not been their father, these
white flakes

Had challenged pity of them. Was this a face
To be opposed against the warring winds?
To stand against the deep dread-bolted thunder?
In the most terrible and nimble stroke
Of quick, cross lightning? to watch—poor
perdu*!—

[forlorn hope]

With this thin helm? Mine enemy's dog,
Though he had bit me, should have stood that
night

Against my fire; and wast thou fain, poor father,
To hovel thee with swine, and rogues forlorn,
In short and musty straw? Alack, alack!
'Tis wonder that thy life and wits at once
Had not concluded all. He wakes; speak to him.

Doct. Madam, do you; 'tis fittest.

Cor. How does my royal lord? How fares
your majesty?

Lear. You do me wrong to take me out o' the
grave:

Thou art a soul in bliss; but I am bound
Upon a wheel of fire, that mine own tears
Do scald like molten lead.

Cor. Sir, do you know me?

Lear. You are a spirit, I know: when did you
die?

Cor. Still, still, far wide!

Doct. He's scarce awake: let him alone awhile.

Lear. Where have I been? Where am I?
Fair daylight?

I am mightily abused. I should e'en die with pity,
To see another thus. I know not what to say.

Act IV Scene 7

I will not swear these are my hands : let's see ;
I feel this pin prick. Would I were assured
Of my condition !

Cor. O, look upon me, sir,
And hold your hands in benediction o'er me :
No, sir, you must not kneel.

Lear. Pray, do not mock me :
I am a very foolish fond old man,
Fourscore and upward, not an hour more or less ;
And, to deal plainly,
I fear I am not in my perfect mind.
Methinks I should know you, and know this
man ;

Yet I am doubtful : for I am mainly ignorant
What place this is ; and all the skill I have
Remembers not these garments ; nor I know not
Where I did lodge last night. Do not laugh
at me ;

For, as I am a man, I think this lady
To be my child Cordelia.

Cor. And so I am, I am.

Lear. Be your tears wet ? yes, 'faith. I pray,
weep not ;

If you have poison for me, I will drink it,
I know you do not love me, for your sisters
Have, as I do remember, done me wrong :
You have some cause, they have not.

Cor. No cause, no cause.

Lear. Am I in France ?

Kent. In your own kingdom, sir.

Lear. Do not abuse me.

Doct. Be comforted, good madam : the great
rage,

You see, is kill'd in him : and yet it is danger
To make him even o'er the time he has lost.
Desire him to go in ; trouble him no more

King Lear

Till further settling.*

[composure]

Cor. Will't please your highness walk?

Lear. You must bear with me; pray you now, forget and forgive: I am old and foolish.

[*Exeunt all but Kent and Gentleman.*]

Gent. Holds it true, sir, that the Duke of Cornwall was so slain?

Kent. Most certain, sir.

Gent. Who is conductor of his people?

Kent. As 'tis said, the bastard son of Gloucester.

Gent. They say Edgar, his banished son, is with the Earl of Kent in Germany.

Kent. Report is changeable. 'Tis time to look about: the powers of the kingdom approach apace.

Gent. The arbitrement is like to be bloody. Fare you well, sir. [Exit.]

Kent. My point and period will be thoroughly wrought,
Or well or ill, as this day's battle's fought.
[Exit.]

ACT V.

SCENE 1.—The British Camp, near Dover.

Enter, with drum and colours, Edmund, Regan, Gentlemen and Soldiers.

Edm. Know of the duke if his last purpose hold,

Or whether since he is advised by aught
To change the course: he's full of alteration
And self-reproving: bring his constant pleasure.*

[settled resolution]

[*To a Gentleman who goes out.*]

Reg. Our sister's man is certainly miscarried.

Act V Scene 1

Edm. 'Tis to be doubted,* madam, [feared]

Reg. Now, sweet lord,

You know the goodness I intend upon you :
Tell me—but truly—but then speak the truth,
Do you not love my sister ?

Edm. In honour'd love.

Reg. But have you never found my brother's
way

To the forfended place ?

Edm. That thought abuses you.

Reg. I am doubtful that you have been
conjunct

And bosom'd with her, as far as we call hers.

Edm. No, by mine honour, madam.

Reg. I never shall endure her : dear my lord,
Be not familiar with her.

Edm. Fear me not :

She and the duke her husband !

*Enter, with drum and colours, Albany,
Goneril, and Soldiers.*

Gon. [*Aside*] I had rather lose the battle than
that sister

Should loosen him and me.

Alb. Our very loving sister, well be-met.
Sir, this I hear ; the king is come to his daughter,
With others whom the rigour of our state
Forced to cry out. Where I could not be honest,
I never yet was valiant : for this business,
It toucheth us, as France invades our land,
Not bolds the king, with others, whom, I fear,
Most just and heavy causes make oppose.

Edm. Sir, you speak nobly.

Reg. Why is this reason'd ?

Gon. Combine together 'gainst the enemy ;
For these domestic and particular broils

King Lear

Are not the question here.

Alb. Let's then determine
With the ancient of war on our proceedings.

Edm. I shall attend you presently at your tent.

Reg. Sister, you'll go with us?

Gon. No.

Reg. 'Tis most convenient; pray you, go
with us.

Gon. [*Aside*] O, ho, I know the riddle.—I
will go.

As they are going out, enter Edgar disguised.

Edg. If e'er your grace had speech with man
so poor,

Hear me one word.

Alb. I'll overtake you. Speak.

[*Exeunt all but Albany and Edgar.*]

Edg. Before you fight the battle, ope this letter.
If you have victory, let the trumpet sound
For him that brought it: wretched though I
seem,

I can produce a champion that will prove
What is avouched there. If you miscarry,
Your business of the world hath so an end,
And machination ceases. Fortune love you!

Alb. Stay till I have read the letter.

Edg. I was forbid it.
When time shall serve, let but the herald cry,
And I'll appear again.

Alb. Why, fare thee well: I will o'erlook thy
paper. [*Exit Edgar.*]

Re-enter Edmund.

Edm. The enemy's in view; draw up your
powers.
Here is the guess of their true strength and
forces

Act V Scene 2

By diligent discovery ; but your haste
Is now urged on you.

Alb. We will greet the time. [*Exit.*]

Edm. To both these sisters have I sworn my
love ;

Each jealous of the other, as the stung
Are of the adder. Which of them shall I take ?
Both ? one ? or neither ? Neither can be enjoy'd,
If both remain alive : to take the widow
Exasperates, makes mad her sister Goneril ;
And hardly shall I carry out my side,
Her husband being alive. Now then we'll use
His countenance for the battle ; which being
done,

Let her who would be rid of him devise
His speedy taking off.* As for the mercy [*murder*
Which he intends to Lear and to Cordelia,
The battle done, and they within our power,
Shall never see his pardon ; for my state
Stands on me to defend, not to debate. [*Exit.*]

SCENE 2.—A Field between the two Camps.

Alarum within. Enter, with drum and colours,
Lear, Cordelia, and Soldiers, over the stage ;
and *Exeunt.*

Enter Edgar and Gloucester.

Edg. Here, father, take the shadow of this tree
For your good host ; pray that the right may
thrive :

If ever I return to you again,
I'll bring you comfort.

Glou. Grace go with you, sir !
[*Exit Edgar.*]

Alarum and retreat within. Re-enter *Edgar.*

Edg. Away, old man ; give me thy hand ; away !

King Lear

King Lear hath lost, he and his daughter ta'en :
Give me thy hand ; come on.

Glou. No farther, sir ; a man may rot even
here.

Edg. What, in ill thoughts again ? Men must
endure
Their going hence, even as their coming hither :
Ripeness is all : come on.

Glou. And that's true too. [*Exeunt.*]

SCENE 3.—The British Camp near Dover.

*Enter, in conquest, with drum and colours,
Edmund ; Lear and Cordelia, prisoners ;
Captain, Soldiers, &c.*

Edm. Some officers take them away : good
guard,
Until their greater pleasures first be known
That are to censure them.

Cor. We are not the first
Who, with best meaning, have incurred the
worst.
For thee, oppressed king, am I cast down ;
Myself could else out-frown false fortune's frown.
Shall we not see these daughters and these
sisters ?

Lear. No, no, no, no ! Come, let's away to
prison :
We two alone will sing like birds i' the cage :
When thou dost ask me blessing, I'll kneel down,
And ask of thee forgiveness : so we'll live,
And pray, and sing, and tell old tales, and laugh
At gilded butterflies, and hear poor rogues
Talk of court news ; and we'll talk with them too,
Who loses and who wins ; who's in, who's out ;
And take upon 's the mystery of things,

•

As if we were God's spies : and we'll wear out,
In a wall'd prison, packs and sects of great ones,
That ebb and flow by the moon.

Edm. Take them away.

Lear. Upon such sacrifices, my Cordelia,
The gods themselves throw incense. Have I
caught thee?

Hethat parts us shall bring a brand from heaven,
And fire us hence like foxes. Wipe thine eyes ;
The good-years shall devour them, flesh and
fell,*

Ere they shall make us weep: we'll see 'em
starve first.

Come. [*Exeunt Lear and Cordelia, guarded.*]

Edm. Come hither, captain ; hark.

Take thou this note [*giving a paper*]; go follow them to prison:

One step I have advanced thee ; if thou dost
As this instructs thee, thou dost make thy way
To noble fortunes : know thou this, that men
Are as the time is : to be tender-minded
Does not become a sword : thy great employment
Will not bear question ; either say thou 'lt do 't,
Or thrive by other means.

Capt. I'll do't, my lord.

Edm. About it; and write happy when thou hast done.

Mark ; I say, instantly, and carry it* so [contrive it
As I have set it down.

Capt. I cannot draw a cart, nor eat dried oats ;
If it be man's work, I'll do't. [*Exit.*]

*Flourish. Enter Albany, Goneril, Regan,
another Captain, and Soldiers.*

Alb. Sir, you have shown to-day your valiant strain,*

King Lear

And fortune led you well : you have the captives
That were the opposites of this day's strife :
We do require them of you, so to use them
As we shall find their merits and our safety
May equally determine.

Edm. Sir, I thought it fit
To send the old and miserable king
To some retention and appointed guard ;
Whose age has charms in it, whose title more,
To pluck the common bosom on his side,
And turn our impress'd lances in our eyes
Which do command them. With him I sent
the queen ;

My reason all the same ; and they are ready
To-morrow, or at further space, to appear
Where you shall hold your session. At this time
We sweat and bleed : the friend hath lost his
friend ;

And the best quarrels, in the heat, are cursed
By those that feel their sharpness :
The question of Cordelia and her father
Requires a fitter place.

Alb. Sir, by your patience,
I hold you but a subject of this war,
Not as a brother.

Reg. That 's as we list to grace him.
Methinks our pleasure might have been de-
manded,

Ere you had spoke so far. He led our powers ;
Bore the commission of my place and person ;
The which immediacy* may well stand up, [supremacy
And call itself your brother.

Gon. Not so hot :
In his own grace he doth exalt himself,
More than in your addition.* [title

Reg. In my rights,

Act V Scene 3

By me invested, he compeers the best.

Gon. That were the most, if he should husband
you.

Reg. Jesters do oft prove prophets.

Gon. Holla, holla!

That eye that told you so look'd but a-squint.

Reg. Lady, I am not well; else I should answer
From a full-flowing stomach.* General, *[passion]*
Take thou my soldiers, prisoners, patrimony;
Dispose of them, of me; the walls are thine:
Witness the world, that I create thee here
My lord and master.

Gon. Mean you to enjoy him?

Alb. The let-alone lies not in your good will.

Edm. Nor in thine, lord.

Alb. Half-blooded fellow, yes.

Reg. *[To Edmund]* Let the drum strike, and
prove my title thine.

Alb. Stay yet; hear reason. Edmund, I arrest
thee

On capital treason; and, in thine attaint,
This gilded serpent *[pointing to Goneril]*. For
your claim, fair sister,

I bar it in the interest of my wife;

'Tis she is sub-contracted to this lord,

And I, her husband, contradict your bans.

If you will marry, make your loves to me;

My lady is bespoke.

Gon. An interlude!

Alb. Thou art arm'd, Gloucester: let the
trumpet sound:

If none appear to prove upon thy head

Thy heinous, manifest, and many treasons,

There is my pledge *[throwing down a glove]*; I'll
prove it on thy heart,

Ere I taste bread, thou art in nothing less

King Lear

Than I have here proclaim'd thee.

Reg. Sick, O, sick !

Gon. [*Aside*] If not, I'll ne'er trust medicine.

Edm. [*Throwing down a glove*] There's my exchange : what in the world he is

That names me traitor, villain-like he lies :

Call by thy trumpet : he that dares approach,

On him, on you,—who not ?—I will maintain

My truth and honour firmly.

Alb. A herald, ho !

Edm. A herald, ho, a herald !

Alb. Trust to thy single virtue ; for thy soldiers,
All levied in my name, have in my name
Took their discharge.

Reg. My sickness grows upon me.

Alb. She is not well ; convey her to my tent.

[*Exit Regan, led.*]

Enter a Herald.

Come hither, herald,—Let the trumpet sound,
And read out this.

Capt. Sound, trumpet ! [*A trumpet sounds.*]

Her. [*Reads*] 'If any man of quality or degree
within the lists of the army will maintain upon
Edmund, supposed Earl of Gloucester, that he
is a manifold traitor, let him appear by the
third sound of the trumpet : he is bold in his
defence.'

Edm. Sound ! [*First trumpet.*]

Her. Again ! [*Second trumpet.*]

Her. Again ! [*Third trumpet.*]

[*Trumpet answers within.*]

*Enter Edgar, at the third sound, armed, with
a trumpet before him.*

Alb. Ask him his purposes, why he appears
Upon this call o' the trumpet.

Act V Scene 3

Her. What are you ?
Your name, your quality? and why you answer
This present summons ?

Edg. Know, my name is lost ;
By treason's tooth bare-gnawn and canker-bit :
Yet am I noble as the adversary
I come to cope.

Alb. Which is that adversary ?

Edg. What's he that speaks for Edmund Earl
of Gloucester ?

Edm. Himself : what say'st thou to him ?

Edg. Draw thy sword,
That, if my speech offend a noble heart,
Thy arm may do thee justice : here is mine.
Behold, it is the privilege of mine honours,
My oath, and my profession* : I [i.e. as a knight
protest,

Maugre* thy strength, youth, place and [in spite of
eminence,
Despite thy victor sword and fire-new* [brand-new
fortune,

Thy valour and thy heart, thou art a traitor,
False to thy gods, thy brother, and thy father,
Conspirant 'gainst this high illustrious prince,
And, from the extremest upward of thy head
To the descent and dust below thy foot,
A most toad-spotted traitor. Say thou 'No,'
This sword, this arm and my best spirits are bent
To prove upon thy heart, whereto I speak,
Thou liest.

Edm. In wisdom I should ask thy name ;
But, since thy outside looks so fair and warlike,
And that thy tongue some say* of breeding [proof
breathes,

What safe and nicely I might well delay
By rule of knighthood, I disdain and spurn :

King Lear

Back do I toss these treasons to thy head ;
With the hell-hated lie o'erwhelm thy heart ;
Which, for they yet glance by and scarcely
bruise,

This sword of mine shall give them instant way,
Where they shall rest for ever. Trumpets,
speak !

[*Alarums. They fight. Edmund falls.*]

Alb. Save him, save him !

Gon. This is practice,* Gloucester : [trickery]
By the law of arms thou wast not bound to
answer

An unknown opposite ; thou art not vanquish'd,
But cozen'd and beguiled.

Alb. Shut your mouth, dame,
Or with this paper shall I stop it : Hold, sir ;
Thou worse than any name, read thine own evil :
No tearing, lady ; I perceive you know it.

[*Gives the letter to Edmund.*]

Gon. Say, if I do, the laws are mine, not thine :
Who can arraign me for 't ?

Alb. Most monstrous ! oh !
Know'st thou this paper ?

Gon. Ask me not what I know. [*Exit.*]

Alb. Go after her : she's desperate ; govern
her.

Edm. What you have charged me with, that
have I done ;
And more, much more ; the time will bring it out :
'Tis past, and so am I. But what art thou
That hast this fortune on me ? If thou'rt noble,
I do forgive thee.

Edg. Let's exchange charity.
I am no less in blood than thou art, Edmund ;
If more, the more thou hast wrong'd me.
My name is Edgar, and thy father's son.

Act V Scene 3

The gods are just, and of our pleasant vices
Make instruments to plague us :
The dark and vicious place where thee he got
Cost him his eyes.

Edm. Thou hast spoken right, 'tis true ;
The wheel is come full circle ; I am here.

Alb. Methought thy very gait did prophesy
A royal nobleness : I must embrace thee :
Let sorrow split my heart, if ever I
Did hate thee or thy father !

Edg. Worthy prince, I know 't.

Alb. Where have you hid yourself ?
How have you known the miseries of your
father ?

Edg. By nursing them, my lord. List a brief
tale ;

And when 'tis told, O, that my heart would burst !
The bloody proclamation to escape,
That follow'd me so near,—O, our lives' sweet-
ness !

That we the pain of death would hourly die
Rather than die at once !—taught me to shift
Into a madman's rags ; to assume a semblance
That very dogs disdain'd : and in this habit
Met I my father with his bleeding rings,
Their precious stones new lost ; became his guide,
Led him, begg'd for him, saved him from despair ;
Never,—O fault !—reveal'd myself unto him,
Until some half-hour past, when I was arm'd :
Not sure, though hoping, of this good success,
I ask'd his blessing, and from first to last
Told him my pilgrimage : but his flaw'd heart,—
Alack, too weak the conflict to support !—
'Twixt two extremes of passion, joy and grief,
Burst smilingly.

Edm. This speech of yours hath moved me,

King Lear

And shall perchance do good : but speak you on ;
You look as you had something more to say.

Alb. If there be more, more woful, hold it in ;
For I am almost ready to dissolve,
Hearing of this.

Edg. This would have seem'd a period
To such as love not sorrow ; but another,
To amplify too much, would make much more,
And top extremity.

Whilst I was big in clamour came there in a man,
Who, having seen me in my worst estate,
Shunn'd my abhorr'd society ; but then, finding
Who 'twas that so endured, with his strong arms
He fasten'd on my neck, and bellow'd out
As he 'ld burst heaven ; threw him on my father ;
Told the most piteous tale of Lear and him
That ever ear received : which in recounting
His grief grew puissant, and the strings of life
Began to crack : twice then the trumpets
sounded,

And there I left him tranced.

Alb. But who was this ?

Edg. Kent, sir, the banish'd Kent ; who in
disguise
Follow'd his enemy king, and did him service
Improper for a slave.

Enter a Gentleman with a bloody knife.

Gent. Help, help, O, help !

Edg. What kind of help ?

Alb. Speak, man.

Edg. What means that bloody knife ?

Gent. 'Tis hot, it smokes ;
It came even from the heart of—O, she 's dead !

Alb. Who dead ? speak man.

Gent. Your lady, sir, your lady : and her sister

Act V Scene 3

By her is poisoned ; she hath confess'd it.

Edm. I was contracted to them both : all three
Now marry in an instant.

Edg. Here comes Kent.

Alb. Produce their bodies, be they alive or
dead :

This judgment of the heavens, that makes us
tremble,

Touches us not with pity. [*Exit Gentleman.*]

Enter Kent.

O, is this he?

The time will not allow the compliment
Which very manners urges.

Kent. I am come
To bid my king and master aye good night :
Is he not here?

Alb. Great thing of us forgot !
Speak, Edmund, where's the king? and where's
Cordelia?

See'st thou this object, Kent?

[*The bodies of Gon. and Reg. are brought in.*]

Kent. Alack, why thus?

Edm. Yet Edmund was beloved :
The one the other poison'd for my sake,
And after slew herself.

Alb. Even so. Cover their faces.

Edm. I pant for life : some good I mean to do,
Despite of mine own nature. Quickly send,
Be brief in it, to the castle ; for my writ
Is on the life of Lear and on Cordelia :
Nay, send in time.

Alb. Run, run, O, run !

Edg. To who, my lord? Who hath the office?
send
Thy token of reprieve.

King Lear

Edm. Well thought on : take my sword,
Give it the captain.

Alb. Haste thee, for thy life. [*Exit Edgar.*]

Edm. He hath commission from thy wife and
me

To hang Cordelia in the prison, and
To lay the blame upon her own despair,
That she fordid* herself. [destroyed]

Alb. The gods defend her ! Bear him hence
awhile. [*Edmund is borne off.*]

*Re-enter Lear, with Cordelia dead in his arms ;
Edgar, Captain, and others following.*

Lear. Howl, howl, howl, howl ! O, you are
men of stones :
Had I your tongues and eyes, I 'ld use them so
That heaven's vault should crack. She's gone
for ever !

I know when one is dead, and when one lives ;
She's dead as earth. Lend me a looking-glass ;
If that her breath will mist or stain the stone,
Why, then she lives.

Kent. Is this the promised end ?

Edg. Or image of that horror ?

Alb. Fall and cease !

Lear. This feather stirs ; she lives ! if it be so,
It is a chance which does redeem all sorrows
That ever I have felt.

Kent. [*Kneeling*] O my good master !

Lear. Prithee, away.

Edg. 'Tis noble Kent, your friend.

Lear. A plague upon you, murtherers, traitors
all !

I might have saved her ; now she's gone for
ever !

Cordelia, Cordelia ! stay a little. Ha !

Act V Scene 3

What is't thou say'st? Her voice was ever soft,
Gentle, and low, an excellent thing in woman.
I kill'd the slave that was a-hanging thee.

Capt. 'Tis true, my lords, he did.

Lear. Did I not, fellow?

I have seen the day, with my good biting fal-
chion*

[a short curved sword]

I would have made them skip: I am old now,
And these same crosses spoil me. Who are you?
Mine eyes are not o' the best: I'll tell you
straight.

Kent. If fortune brag of two she loved and
hated,

One of them we behold.

Lear. This is a dull sight. Are you not Kent?

Kent. The same,

Your servant Kent. Where is your servant
Caius?

Lear. He's a good fellow, I can tell you that;
He'll strike, and quickly too: he's dead and
rotten.

Kent. No, my good lord; I am the very man,—

Lear. I'll see that straight.

Kent. That from your first of difference and
decay

Have follow'd your sad steps—

Lear. You are welcome hither.

Kent. Nor no man else: all's cheerless, dark,
and deadly.

Your eldest daughters have fordone themselves,
And desperately are dead.

Lear. Ay, so I think.

Alb. He knows not what he says: and vain
it is

That we present us to him.

Edg. Very bootless.

King Lear

Enter a Captain.

Capt. Edmund is dead, my lord.

Alb. That's but a trifle here.

You lords and noble friends, know our intent.

What comfort to this great decay may come

Shall be applied : for us, we will resign,

During the life of this old majesty,

To him our absolute power : [*To Edgar and Kent*]

you, to your rights ;

With boot, and such addition as your honours

Have more than merited. All friends shall taste

The wages of their virtue, and all foes

The cup of their deservings. O, see, see !

Lear. And my poor fool is hang'd ! No, no,
no life !

Why should a dog, a horse, a rat, have life,

And thou no breath at all ? Thou'lt come no
more,

Never, never, never, never, never !

Pray you, undo this button : thank you, sir.

Do you see this ? Look on her, look, her lips,

Look there, look there ! [*Dies.*]

Edg. He faints ! My lord, my lord !

Kent. Break, heart ; I prithee, break !

Edg. Look up, my lord.

Kent. Vex not his ghost : O, let him pass ! he
hates him much,

That would upon the rack of this tough world
Stretch him out longer.

Edg. He is gone, indeed.

Kent. The wonder is he hath endured so long :
He but usurp'd his life.

Alb. Bear them from hence. Our present
business

Is general woe. [*To Kent and Edgar*] Friends
of my soul, you twain

Act V Scene 3

Rule in this realm, and the gored state sustain.

Kent. I have a journey, sir, shortly to go ;
My master calls me, I must not say no.

Alb. The weight of this sad time we must obey ;
Speak what we feel, not what we ought to say.
The oldest hath borne most : we that are young
Shall never see so much, nor live so long.

[Exeunt, with a dead march.]



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